

THE JOURNAL
OF FUN
AND GAMES

GAMES

INTERNATIONAL February/March No.13 £1.95 US \$4.50

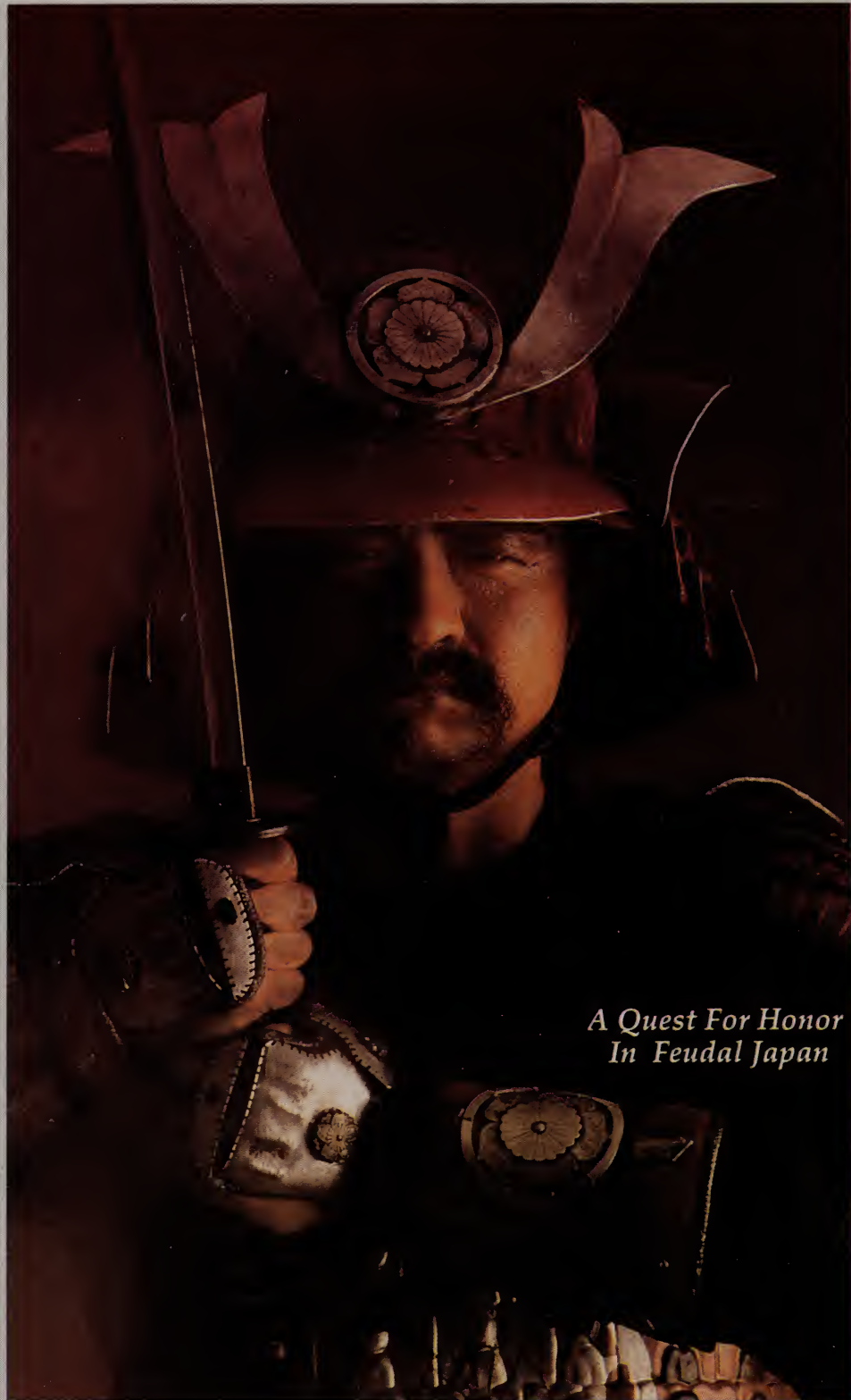
IN THIS ISSUE

SAMURAI
Kung Fu or
Kurosawa?

**BLOOD
ROYAL**
Back to the
roots

5th FLEET
Now in port

**SOFTWARE
REVIEWS**



*A Quest For Honor
In Feudal Japan*

侍

SWOARD
OF THE

S
A
M
U
R
A
I
™

Panzer Battles, Gold of the Americas, Sword of Aragon, Pro Football Simulator, plus many more.

WALK INTO THE SHADOWS.



SPRAWL

S • I • T • E • S

A SHADOWRUN™ SOURCEBOOK

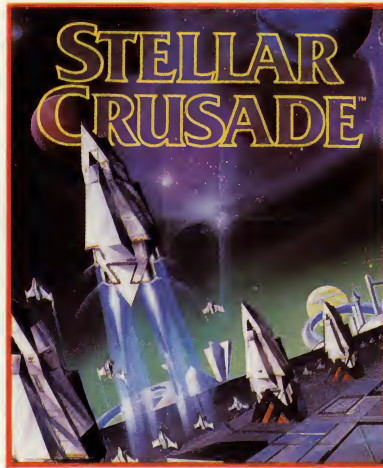
Shadowrun and Sprawl Sites are Trademarks of FASA Corporation. Copyright © 1990 FASA Corporation.

SSI... A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF ACTION AND ADVENTURE



RED LIGHTNING™ Face the fearsome power of the Soviet army in the war that as yet has only been talked about – the explosive collision between the forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Painstaking military research and strategic intelligence challenge the avid wargamer to explore the myriad of possible outcomes should World War III erupt.

ATARI ST & IBM PC £29.99
AMIGA £29.99



STELLAR CRUSADE™ Two fanatical groups embark on a mad race to control a small, but vital star cluster. It is an exciting strategy game of exploration, economic power and military conquest on an interstellar scale. As the leader of one faction your first task is to send out an exploration team to the best planets and colonize them.

IBM PC £34.99
ATARI ST & AMIGA £34.99



STAR COMMAND™ A multicharacter adventure where all your space born fantasies come alive. Create your select band of eight startroopers and hunt down the infamous Blackbeard and his band of intergalactic pirates only to find (should you survive) an entire alien, insectoid race poised to make a blood chilling invasion of your universe.

ATARI ST & AMIGA £29.99
IBM PC £34.99

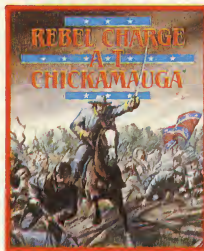
DEMON'S WINTER™ The demon god Malifon has cast his Demon's Winter upon the land, in order that his minions – the Kobolds and goblins – may thrive in their task to free



him from incarceration. It is only the combined powers of your party of five – be they barbarian and thief, or wizard and scholar – that can uncover the spells to trap Malifon forever and undo his wintry curse.

CBM 64/128 DISK £19.99
IBM PC £24.99
ATARI ST & AMIGA £24.99

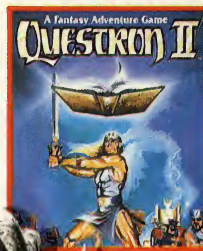
REBEL CHARGE AT CHICKAMAUGA™ In August 1863 the Federal Army of the Cumberland under Major General William Rosecrans was sent eastward to march against



Chattanooga, and against General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. So it was that at dawn on September 19, both sides were poised around Chickamauga Creek, prepared to prove its Cherokee name prophetic – 'River of Death'.

CBM 64/128 DISK £24.99
IBM PC & AMIGA £29.99

QUESTRON II™ "The only way to destroy the Evil Book of Magic is to prevent it from ever being created!". And with these words from Mesron, the Great Wizard, you realize the



adventure you thought had ended in Questron has only just begun. As Mesron begins his mystical incantation, you feel a darkness enveloping you, the air crackling with an unearthly sound.

ATARI ST/AMIGA £24.99

There's a world full of opportunities with SSI – the dramas of the past, the mysteries of the future, gathered together to form an unrivalled collection of role playing fantasies and all action simulations that offer a new dimension in computer entertainment.

YOU'LL MAKE SOME UNUSUAL FRIENDS AS YOU EXPLORE OTHER TIMES, OTHER WORLDS



U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Tel: 021 625 3388



LATEST RELEASES

UPFRONT

With the increasing number of games being imported and sold by this magazine, it's perhaps time to come clean about our reviewing policy *vis-à-vis* these games. For one thing, tongues have started to wag among those less pure of mind.

The only companies to which we offer our 'import' service are the ones which we think have games which will interest our readers, and even then, not *all* their games. Just the ones which we think we can recommend with a clear conscience.

In other words, we import games which we think are good rather than import games and then give them good reviews.

Consequently the French and German games which we review will receive favourable coverage. There seems little point in wasting space covering games which are both unobtainable and poor.

Our aim is to make good games, from wherever, just a phone call away. This should be blindingly obvious to most, but spare a thought for the less gifted in our midst.

A different situation presents itself in the domestic market. Our policy here is to review *most* of the British games we think our readers would be interested in. Again, we *could* offer our mail order service to the smaller companies who face distribution difficulties. The problem here is a lack of quality. We don't want to be seen selling and recommending any old rubbish. Virtually *all* of the American releases in this country will be reviewed simply because of their comparative availability.

Later this year several of our writers, such as Alan Moon, Derek Carver, and Ian Livingstone, will have several of their own games published, thus offering a potential field day for the cynics. How will we go about reviewing these games without facing charges of nepotism? Should we review them at all? In fact, not only will we be reviewing them, but we'll be twisting the arms of these writers to provide us

with some design articles pertaining to their games.

Dark minds will always think dark thoughts. Whatever we say won't change that. GI

Owing to the overwhelming response (honest!) to our reader survey, we are having to delay our response until next issue.

ISSUE 13

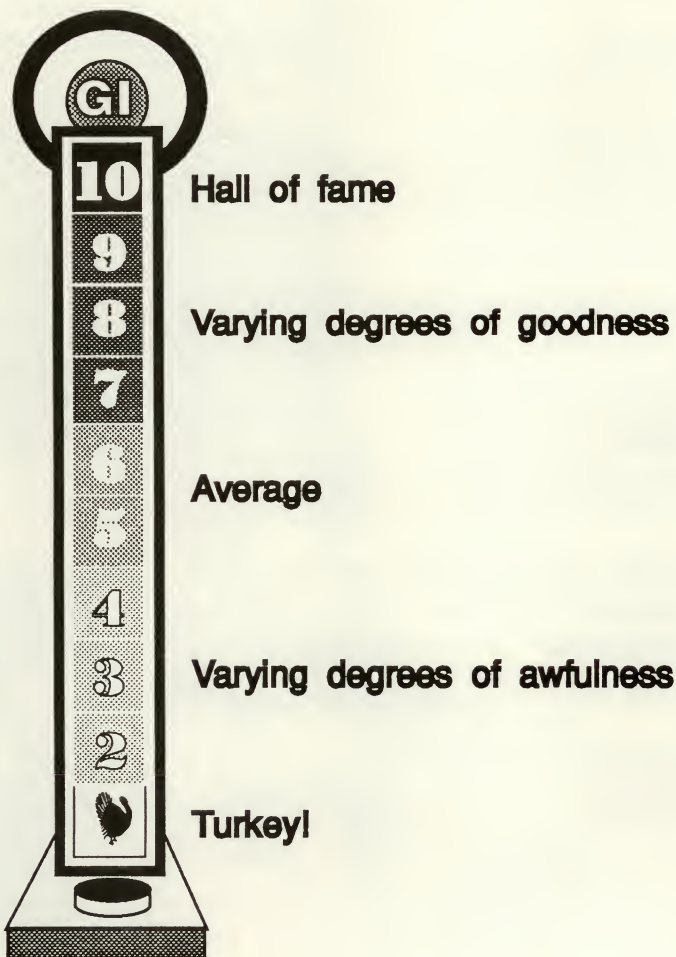
No more equivocating with $\frac{1}{2}$ stars. Say goodbye also to those boring three star reviews. From now on you'll know exactly where we stand thanks to our new streamlined rating system.

At the top of the scale you'll observe The Hall of Fame, admission to which will be tough indeed. A complete list of the hallowed hall's occupants will be published in our next issue, and boy, are you in for some surprises!

No Hall of Fame material in this month's new releases, though **Fifth Fleet** and **Abalone** come close. If there were a custodian of this institution, who better for the job than Sid Sackson, who has provided gamers everywhere with so much pleasure. In the first of a series, Sid keeps up the good work with **Spy** – a simple, and typically clever, pencil and paper game. Elsewhere, former *S&T* editor Ty Bomba launches his new magazine *Command*, which contains a new game **Blitzkrieg '41**. Our reviewer Charles Vasey predicts a healthy future for this new venture. In the computer game section, American Football makes a big play with three teams in contention, while SSG get the credit they deserve for producing such consistently excellent games.

As a prelude to the reviews of his new games **Cash** and **Midnight Party**, we include an interview with the great games designer Wolfgang Kramer, conducted last year at the Essen Games Fair.

The Big Game Hunter continues his historical feature on American games, and in the next issue will be taking a detailed look at that old favourite **Risk**, as part of a special feature on that game. GI





ISSN 0955-4424

Editor: *Brian Walker*Production Editor: *Paul Mason*Illustrators: *Ralf Kahlert, Lee Brimmicombe-Wood*

Contributors: *Derek Carver, George Crawshaw, Mark Green, John Harrington, Dave Hughes, John Humphries, John Inglis, Mike Jarvis, Steve Jones, Steve G Jones, Ian Livingstone, Alan R Moon, Ian Marsh, Dave Morris, Philip Murphy, Marcus L Rowland, Sid Sackson, Mike Siggins, James Wallis, Bruce Whitehill, Mike Woodhouse.*

Cover: *Microprose's Sword of the Samurai.*

Printer: *Worcestershire Web Offset Ltd, Berry Hill Ind Est, Droitwich, Worcs WR9 9BL*

Distributor: *Diamond Distribution*

0424 430422

Games International, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF.

01-567 7740

Fax: 01-579 6485

Games International is published by Foxray Ltd. Reg No 2270529. Vat No 495 4478 93

UK subscriptions – £15 for 12 issues. European subscriptions – £18 for 12 issues. US subscriptions – £22 for 12 issues. Write to the above address or fill in the form on page 31.

© Copyright here and abroad of all editorial content is held by the publishers Foxray Ltd, though the views expressed in the magazine are those of the writers plus anybody they happen to be talking to at the time.

CONTENTS

GENERAL GAMES

6 REVIEWS

Abalone, Liftoff, Clubhouse Baseball and Chamelequin.

12 BIRTH OF A DYNASTY

Derek Carver describes how he went about designing his game of warring lineages, published by Games Workshop as *Blood Royale*.

15 BOOK REVIEW

Brian Walker looks at *How to launch your own boardgame*.

16 OLD BONES, NEW BODIES

Bruce Whitehill, the Big Game Hunter, continues his look at the history of the American board game, with a look at Parker Brothers.

19 THE GI INTERVIEW

Brian Walker talks to *Wolfgang Kramer*.

21 SPY

A short pencil and paper game for two, designed by *Sid Sackson*.

26 IT'S A FAIR COP

Essen and Nürnberg have both recently hosted important trade exhibitions. We report on the new and exciting discoveries made at them.

WARGAMES

34 REVIEWS

Fifth Fleet, Blitzkrieg '41 and Siege of Jerusalem.

ROLEGAMES

39 REVIEWS

Time of the Dragon, Waterdeep, Starfire, Ars Magica 2nd Edition, Saga Pack and The Stormrider.

42 CHILD'S PLAY

Marcus Rowland explores a hitherto untapped source of campaign ideas – the world of children's fiction.

COMPUTER GAMES

44 REVIEWS

Sword of the Samurai, Scapeghost, Bandit Kings of Ancient China, Rommel, Panzer Battles, Sword of Aragon, Gold of the Americas, Pro Football, Head Coach and Gridiron.

REGULARS

23 R.I.P
Long Cours/Käpt'n und Pirat.

24 DESERT ISLAND GAMES
This month – *John Humphries*.

30 SNIPER
International gaming gossip.

32 NEWS

56 BITS
What's new and exciting in the world of computer games.

57 REBOUND
The readers write.

58 CLASSIFIEDS
Free listing of clubs, conventions and small ads.

REVIEWS

GENERAL GAMES

LIFTOFFDESIGNED BY
FRITZ BRONNERPUBLISHED BY
TASK FORCE GAMES

PRICE £17.99

RATING: 8

Liftoff was released at Origins, where it acquired something of a reputation as last year's 'sleeper'. It took some time to surface over here and the price was far from appealing for what is a 'paper & charts' game, so it was only recently that I snapped up a copy for a tenner in the January sales. **Liftoff's** subject matter is the space race from the 1950s to the early 1970s and the winner is the first player to get a man on the moon having completed all the preparatory missions.

The cost angle is rammed home when you open the bookcase box. Although the materials are workable and reasonably well designed, there are very few of them and they lie forlornly at the bottom of the box. The map is one of the smallest I've seen, the cards depicting the hardware and astronauts are rather flimsy and the record sheets could be clearer. Conversely, the box art is rather good. It shows a stirring Saturn V launch, but is spoiled by some indifferent lettering.

The game is for up to four players (there is also a strong solitaire option) who play one of the USA, the Soviets, Europe and a fictional Asian team. You start with an annual development budget that fluctuates throughout the game. This is affected by successful and failed missions, public opinion, grants and other factors which are determined by event cards. It must be said that some of these are rather drastic (lose 50% of all funding is particularly nasty and should probably be removed for a more balanced game).

is rushing their rockets to the pad which makes this phase very competitive.

Mission resolution is simple but effective. Each step of the mission is represented by a dice roll which must be less than the safety factor for the relevant hardware; for instance the EVA suit is tested during a spacewalk. Your overall chances of success are therefore only as good as the weakest link and there are negative modifiers for 'rushed' launches which don't help.

If you succeed, you carry on to the next section of the mission, but when a roll is missed and something goes awry (and it is a rare mission that goes off perfectly) another roll is made on the relevant event chart. This is what adds the atmosphere to the game as there is a constant threat of something going horribly wrong – even the safest hardware is only about 95% efficient. For instance, having encountered a re-entry problem the charts determine if the capsule blows up, survives intact or suffers some intermediate disaster. Occasionally, depending on the problem, the astronaut can rectify the situation with a saving roll and in this way they build up valuable experience. There are several pages of charts which should make each game different. Each chart is specifically weighted towards the difficulty of the particular mission phase. Re-entry, for instance, is always difficult (and rightly so) but a simple retro rocket firing procedure will rarely cause problems (but if it does you'd better have a rescue mission on the pad ready to go).

SAFETY THIRST

The first task is to get your space industry under way with the aim of launching the first orbital satellite. This is achieved through the neat R&D system. Simply, you choose the type of hardware you want to produce – for example a single stage rocket – and gradually sink money into the project to improve its safety factor. This factor is expressed as a percentage and each round of R&D allows you to buy a number of six sided dice worth of improvement. When you think your rocket, capsule, satellite or whatever is safe enough and ready to go, you announce a launch and then proceed to the mission phase. Speed is important here as budget increases are earned for being the first to achieve each mission type. Each launch is a trade off between risk and potential glory, and everyone

RUSSIAN ROULETTE

The game we played lasted around three hours by which time we had completed just over half the required missions. The whole game would have probably run to five hours or so. This is quite lengthy but there were four players and the inevitable learning process took its toll. The game can be speeded up by starting later in the development sequence (that is, already having achieved earth orbital technology). Alternatively, it is possible to perform most phases jointly which saves time, but you tend to lose track of the other players' projects.



Liftoff: High tech subject, low tech components

The system is cleverly designed and if the subject interests you there is a real sense of achievement at the end of a mission. On several occasions there were cheers, even from the cynics, as an exhausted space walker struggled back to the capsule or when a sinking capsule was rescued from the Pacific. There was also a strange silence when a Russian rocket fireballed on the launch pad killing all the crew. For me, these aren't feelings that occur in a poor game.

Liftoff is a hard game to summarise. I know deep down that it is not going to appeal to everyone, yet there is definitely something there that triggered my interest. I suppose it is best described as a game in which to participate rather than play, like being involved in an unfolding story. This is because you tend to be

playing against the event tables and there is considerable luck involved in a successful mission. However, you can minimise this essential luck factor (by improving safety levels) and there is plenty of decision making in choosing R&D strategy and deciding whether to risk early launches. As **Liftoff** is more of a simulation than a game, it can also feel rather processional and mechanical at times if you don't get into the spirit of the subject. It is also perhaps a little non-interactive for some tastes but there are incentives to co-operate on missions and to bargain for shared technology. At the high price it is hard to justify as a speculative purchase but if you see it for less, or get a chance to play it, give it a try.

Mike Siggins

ity but deprives your opening swot of any advantage.

All pieces move in the same way: one square in any direction, like a chess king. Each time you move you must either add or remove a collar so that the one on the top of the stack matches the colour of the square you move to. You only move one square if you are adding a collar, but up to three squares if you are removing collars.

You capture an opponent's piece by displacement – that is, by occupying the square on which it stands. However, you can only do this by removing a collar, not by adding one. Thus in theory you could capture three pieces on a turn. At all times the top collar of every piece must correspond in colour to that of the square on which the piece stands. The object of the game, in case you haven't guessed, is to wipe out the opposition.

If you have been following carefully, the more intelligent reader will be able to make a few deductions. For instance, you can only capture an opponent's piece if you have at least two collars on your piece, and you can move a piece up to the number of squares that you have collars on it, less one. If you are alert enough to see that two collars of the same colour can never be next to each other on a piece, then you should think seriously about buying the game (unless of course you are colour-blind) since you clearly have aptitude and are likely to have a head start over the opposition.

SIGNPOSTS

Which brings me to a gripe. I happen to enjoy abstract games (I certainly enjoyed **Chamelequin**), but many people don't. It can be frustrating to sit down to a game of skill the rules and object of which you know, but nothing else. Even more so if the game's inventor has the cheek to suggest (they sometimes do) that players will have fun discovering those little wrinkles that make the game so appealing. This ploy is often a mask for ignorance. The

CHAMELEQUIN

DESIGNED BY
RICHARD BREESE

PUBLISHED BY
R&D GAMES

PRICE £12.95

RATING: 7

The playing pieces are like large inverted drawing pins, each one capable of supporting four Polos (enough free advertisements: they're called collars from now on, though the rules call them counters). The collars are easily dropped on or removed.

The pieces come in four distinct colours: black (10), white (10), pink (8) and grey (8). Black and white are used by the players in the two player game; if three or four are playing, the number of pieces is dropped to eight a player.

Chamelequin is a game of total skill. The first skill required is that of interpreting the rules; however, they're all there and quite simple once you've got the hang of them.

BLUE COLLAR

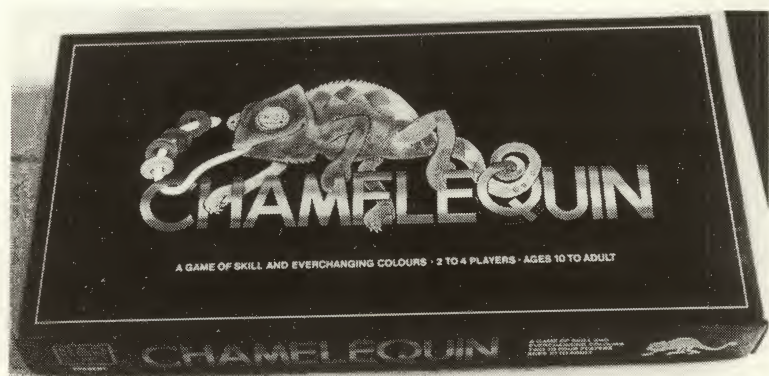
To start, you choose colours and then place your pieces on the board one at a time in turn, at the same time dropping a collar of the same colour on the pieces as the square on which it is placed. This arrangement allows for umpteen starting positions which not only makes for var-

It is a sad reflection on the UK market that games often sell on the visual impact of the box lid. But that has to be good news for the makers of **Chamelequin** who have not only a striking box design but, unusually for an abstract game, have hit on a name that conveys something of the theme.

It is a fair bet that the title is a marriage of chameleon and harlequin, signalling both change and colours. This seems to be confirmed by the sell line: 'A game of skill and everchanging colours,' which describes it in the proverbial nutshell.

The components comprise a board, 36 playing pieces and 20 each of what I can only describe as plastic Polos in four flavours (all right, colours): strawberry, blueberry, lime and lemon.

The board is identical to the standard chess board except that the squares are coloured. The colours match those of the Polos; there are 16 of each hue, arranged regularly so that no square abuts another square of the same colour, not even diagonally.



structuring of **Chamelequin** does not suggest that the inventor, Richard Breese, is guilty of this crime, but why no advice on play? A few signposts allow the beginner to start playing with some purpose and certainly with greater enjoyment. Not in long range planning or co-ordinated actions perhaps (I am not convinced these can be achieved in **Chamelequin**), but at least in tactical skirmishes. The initial deployment is another area where a word of guidance would be welcome: why occupy one square in preference to another, for example? Or doesn't it matter? (This seems unlikely in a game of skill.) Hints on play could well replace a half page in

the rules on an elaborate system for breaking ties (something about players keeping account of the collars on every piece captured as they go along, and applying a fifty move rule). Better simply to let players agree a result where doubt arises.

The rules say hopefully that 'the three and four player games allow the weaker players to overcome stronger opponents before turning on each other.' That cuts both ways. In the four player game we played, the stronger players combined to annihilate the weaker players before sitting about each other!

Two other small observations. **Chamelequin** is classed as '10 to adult'. The manufacturers are under-selling the game: an average 7 year old should be able to master it.

A final plea is to invest in colour printing for the rules. Yes, I know the cost, but this is one game that surely calls for it. Hints could then be gracefully presented in diagram form and the illustration, in five shades of black, used to explain the capturing move, could be dispensed with.

David Pritchard

ABALONE

DESIGNED BY
LAURENT LEVI

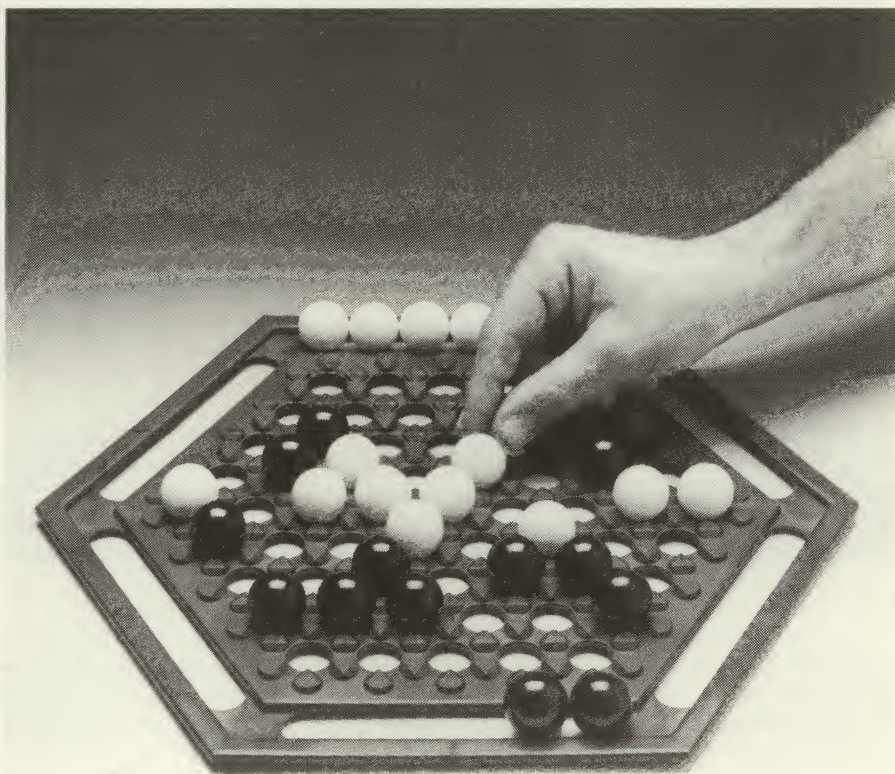
PUBLISHED BY
ABALONE SA/SERIF

PRICE £20

RATING: 8

I have never been a big fan of abstract games. It says something that **Abalone** is the first one that I have played more than once or twice and it is not solely because it is loosely based on sumo wrestling. The idea of the game is simply to push the opponent's pieces off the edge of the playing area. That doesn't sound spectacular but it is the way this is done that gives the game its high interest level and parallels with sumo.

Abalone comes in a hexagonal flat box which contains extremely concise rules, a hexagonal plastic base and thirty large marbles, fifteen each of black and white. The components are of good quality and the recessed base permits easy movement of the balls, which is essential to the game. The two players set up the marbles in three rows and alternate in moving single marbles one space or moving complete 'rows' of two or three marbles either forward, backward or laterally. The game's clever device is that you can push back a lesser number of your opponent's marbles at the same time. This is known as a 'Sumito'. That is, a row of three marbles can push two, two can push one. Rows of four are immovable which enables defensive zones to be set up that must be approached from their weak sides. Eventually, after much activity, you or your opponent will be unable to escape the attack and a move will push a marble



off the edge. Play continues until five marbles (three or four for a short game) are lost over the side and games are usually very close.

LOSING YOUR MARBLES

The tactics and potential moves that develop are fascinating. Lines of marbles advance across the board and various tactical formations are possible. There are fans of the flying wedge, the steady wall advance and the flank assault. The first tactic learnt is usually the chess-like fork move where your opponent has two marbles on the edge and you move in to be able to push either next turn. Nasty. The rows can be 'cut' by a row coming in laterally and defence can turn to attack in no time. There are so many ways to play and

win the game that I am sure it has the potential to become a classic. There is probably even enough variety in the early game to warrant chess-like analysis of the opening moves.

My only comment, and what costs **Abalone** a higher rating, is that as players become more proficient the game can slow up and stalemates frequently result. This is aggravated in the end game where there are fewer marbles in play, making the coup de grâce that much more difficult. I would therefore strongly recommend a chess clock if you have one. Despite this small drawback, **Abalone** is one of the best abstract games to appear in a long while – it must be, even I like it.

Mike Siggins

CLUBHOUSE BASEBALL

DESIGNER UNKNOWN

PUBLISHED BY
CLUBHOUSE GAMES INC

PRICE £24.95

RATING: 7

I greet every new stats baseball game release with mixed feelings. As a keen sports gamer I'm happy that another one has appeared for me to try out, but at the same time I wonder whether the market can stand another me-too system. **Clubhouse Baseball** is the latest to challenge the established might of **Strat-O-Matic**, **Statis Pro** and **Pursue the Pennant**, and it is the latter that sets the pace these days.

The first impression **Clubhouse Baseball** gives is of bulk and quality. The weight is mainly due to the usual substantial mound of individual player cards: 624 in this case, covering the 1988 season, made from high quality glossy card. There is a stack of other items, most impressive of which is the book of playing fields used to resolve outs and home runs. This all struggles to fit inside a largish box that is sadly let down by some poor cover artwork.

The rule book is blissfully short at thirty pages of well spaced text and it is well written. A good selection of tactical options are included and these are also described clearly. As an experienced player, I was up and running in about fifteen minutes, but a familiarity with baseball terms is expected so allow a bit longer and grab a good reference book if it is your first time.

PHILLY SOUND

The system is simplicity itself. It is based on rolling three six-sided dice which generate a fairly realistic range of outs, hits and special plays. Mike Schmidt hit two homers and struck out as many times so it can't be too bad. The trouble with baseball games is that you can get screwy results for a few games and then it will settle down and appear pretty normal. This is what happened with me. The first game saw my traditional Phillies lose 14-2 to the Cubs, the next was a 1-0 win for the Cardinals and finally they took a 15-3 victory over the Dodgers. Without playing lots more games (an entire season) it is hard to say whether these results were indicative of the system's instability or just weird results that do happen from time to time. Anyone care to analyse the 600 cards to see if the stat systems are sound? No, thought not.

So, the system as it stands works well, the pieces are great and it feels something like a baseball game. What next? Well, there is this game called **Pursue the Pen-**

nant (daft title) lurking in the background against which all baseball stat games must apparently be measured. Unfortunately, **Clubhouse Baseball** doesn't match up in the replay category that is **Pursue the Pennant's** forte. For example: it seems to take an overly simplistic view of fielding, it pays scant attention to the important left and right handed matchups and one pitcher seems very much like another on the mound, which simply isn't the way it works. It may seem unfair to compare the two, particularly since **Pursue the Pennant** costs around £40, but for the avid replay gamers out there only the best will do. **Clubhouse Baseball** makes little or no impact on the arbitrary standard that **Pursue the Pennant** represents (or for that matter on **Statis Pro** or **Strat Baseball**) and it is therefore hard to see many people buying it as an out and out replay game.

IN THE CLUB

This said, **Clubhouse Baseball** has some neat ideas (especially the deterministic but workable pitcher stamina rules) and because it offers a perfectly adequate subset of more complex systems, it plays quickly. The games took me half an hour or so which speeded up to twenty minutes once the system had been mastered. Unlike **Pursue the Pennant**, it is not possible to play this game with the cards alone. The eight different playing fields frequently come into play depending on the game situation and they show graphically where the ball gets to on a play and where the runners end up.

If **Clubhouse Baseball** falls a little short of the optimum replay game, where does it succeed? My view is that it will work as an ideal starter game for the beginner who will get plenty of use from it before perhaps choosing to move onto other, more complex, games. Of course, it will also sell to sports gamers (who seem to buy everything on their sport) and, given the high quality, to some collectors.

Mike Siggins



**New Zealand
invented and made**

*Anyone can take the
wind out of "De Savaroy" sails
and win with Cup Fever!*



THE AMERICA'S CUP CHALLENGE & REGATTA GAME

*A brand new yachting board game that
anyone can play and win!*

Ideal for players
8 years and up.



JACKABEE SERVICES (U.K.)

Hampton Workspace Centre Telephone
13-25 High St National (01) 979 2262
8-9 Hurst Mount International (00441) 979 2262
Hampton-Upon-Thames Facsimile
TW12 2SH National (01) 979 2187
Middlesex International (00441) 979 2187
United Kingdom Telex 9312132822 TF-G
E-Mail (Telecom Gold) 74 SKK 583

SUBSIDIARY OF JACKABEE SERVICES (N.Z.) LIMITED

TEST YOUR SKILLS AGAINST THE GREATEST MILITARY MINDS OF ALL TIME.



Are you an undiscovered military genius?
Find out with the Gamemaster series
from MB, and relive the drama of history's
most exciting battles.

Each game has hundreds of pieces,
highly detailed game maps and an
absorbing rule book to give you hours of
challenging game play.

Reshape history as you battle
to the ultimate victory.



GAMEMASTER – BRING THE BATTLE TO LIFE.

Axis & Allies



Spring 1942, the height of the Second World War.

Mobilise your country, command your forces and attack the enemy by land, sea and air. And work together with your allies buying the armaments to fight epic battles.

Your goal is to occupy the enemy's capital city in the game where destiny is decided by the roll of a dice.

Shogun



It is the late 16th Century. Feudal Japan is at war.

Experience all the finely honed discipline of ancient Japanese warfare. Outwit your opponents, in a ruthless quest for territorial supremacy.

You command whole armies of deadly warriors as you battle to become Shogun, the military ruler of all Japan.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

Birth of a dynasty

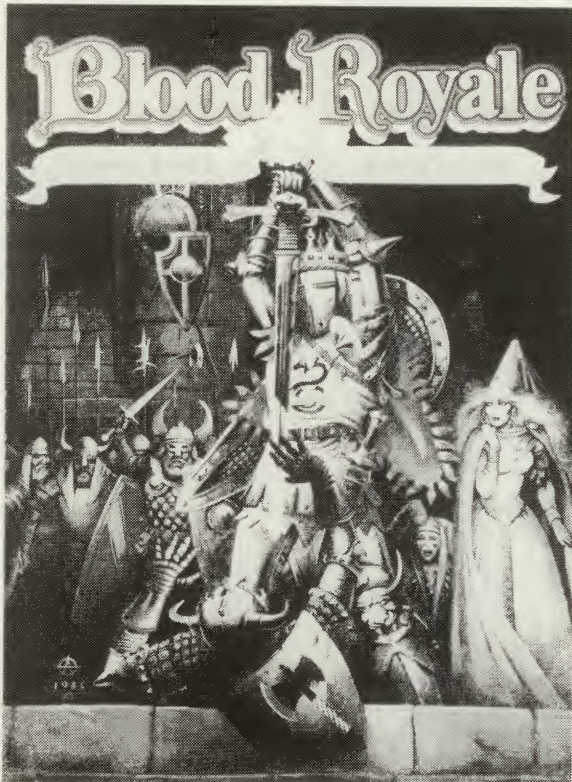


Photo: Ian Livingstone

Derek Carver explains the design of his game of competing dynasties, published by Games

Workshop as Blood Royale.

Ideas for new games present themselves in a variety of ways. Sometimes, though rarely, as complete games, sometimes as a system devised, perhaps, with playing cards or counters, around which a theme is subsequently developed, and sometimes as a scenario which has the potential of being made the subject of a good game.

If **Blood Royal** (in common with many people, I prefer to drop that final mysterious 'E') came into any of the categories it was the third one.

In my earlier game – **Warrior Knights** – I was enthusiastic about the idea of games during the course of which the players 'assembled' and used their skills to vote

on issues which would greatly affect subsequent play. Although such an idea had great appeal for me it wasn't sufficient for a game in itself and a much wider game had to be developed around this core concept. Much the same thing happened in **Blood Royal**.

Unlike many gamers, I would not call myself a history buff, but I do enjoy reading history, and I had also been an avid watcher of the TV series *The Plantagenets*, having visited many of the locations as a result of my fascination with this period. The history of the Middle Ages illustrates that not everything was achieved purely by conquest (although military might was a great bargaining factor in one's favour). Prolonged

campaigning was not easy. There was considerable diplomacy, often sealed by a marriage contract. Here, I felt, was the substance for a game. I wanted to make a game where each player was a monarch who would produce children, marry them off to the family's advantage, secure trade routes and wage war. Each player was Henry II, if you like.

SURVIVAL CHANCES

From the start I decided the only realistic way forward would be to include an element of role-playing in the game. I therefore gave each 'character' a character sheet in the true role-playing tradition. The die-rolls recorded on this sheet determined 1) how healthy the character was, 2) how strong in battle or diplomatic cunning, and 3) how attractive to the populace. The first was an indication of survival chances – especially important to the women who, it was hoped, would produce a number of children, hopefully some strong males. The second is self-explanatory, women being able to confer their qualities on their husbands. The

third quality reflected the character's general popularity. A popular king could roam Europe with less fear of rebellion breaking out at home and an attractive princess was always to be hope for.

This all meant that the characters in the game also had to die from time to time so instead of being only Henry II, the English player, for example, would have to represent the more abstract concept of the entire dynasty, and this gave the game its original name – *Dynasties*. Thus, the game differed from normal role-playing in that instead of players *being* their character they would in this game control *many* characters, all different.

Each player starts the game with a king, a queen, and two children, all of specified age. Dice rolls are made to determine the sex of each child and rolls are also made to determine the three characteristics of each member of the family. Each is given a character sheet recording year of birth and so on, and the players also have to choose their dynastic name and names for each of the characters. This meant that from the start the game was peopled by seemingly real and quite different characters ('different' because of their individual qualities). The only unreal thing about it is that at the start each player controls families all of the same age, but this situation doesn't last for long.

FEWER CHILDREN

Play is in five year segments, starting with 1300. A survival die roll has to be made for each character every five years. Their survival chances vary, of course, according to age, childbirth, and fitness (the original die roll 1) mentioned above).

One of the many changes that took place during the early days was the reduction in the number of small children that were around. Originally more children were born, but quite a few died before they reached the age of 15, which is the age they are of any interest to us in terms of the game. So in order not to make die rolls and fill out character sheets for children that didn't survive to 15 the system was adjusted. Fewer children were born, but those that were born were guaranteed to

survive to 15. We ended up with the same number of young adults but saved a lot of time and paper in the process.

So this was the core idea. The early problem was what to do with the idea. We couldn't sit around the entire evening manipulating these royal families; we had to *do* something with them.

The first problem was that history did not have a four to six player game in mind, each with more or less equal chances. While England hasn't changed much geographically speaking, the rest of Europe has, and there was no Germany and no Italy as such. Unlike **Warrior Knights** where I felt the correct answer was to create a fictitious country, with **Blood Royal** I knew I could only maintain the historical 'feel' I was aiming for if I set my game firmly in medieval Europe, so I had to create Kingdoms of Germany and Italy, and also give each country in the game the same number of provinces. This doesn't seem to have bothered people as much as I thought it would (although I don't know what German and Italian players think about it!). But even with my cavalier attitude to history and geography there was no way in which I could easily bring in a sixth power, so I restricted the game to a maximum of five.

So – I had already departed from history, but the general feeling in the game was all right.

THRASH AND BASH

What next? I didn't want it to be a thrash and bash wargame. I decided I wanted it to be centred on the securing of trade and trade routes plus income from taxes. The latter was pretty simple – I allowed players to collect taxes from each province they owned with the option of double taxing. The latter increased the chances of the highly taxed provinces going into rebellion – a calculated risk, in other words, which is a concept that always appeals to me and about which more anon.

For the trading I hit upon an idea which I must confess to being rather pleased with and which could, in itself, have been the core idea for another game. Wanting it kept simple, I devised a system of three basic commodities (what they are called is unimportant – let's call them A B and C). Each country had to acquire these commodities and transport them to their capital to be 'cashed in'. But they could cash them in only in sets of three (ABC). In the full five player game there are only three of each type around the board, which means there are not enough for

each player to have a set each time. Also no single country produces one of each (they might produce two As and a C, for example). This means that in order to secure the missing item(s) players had either to trade, secure them by contract (about which more later), or capture the province in which a desired 'missing' item is produced.

Additionally there are around the board two somewhat more luxurious commodities – two Ds and one E. If, instead of trading in a set of just ABC, you can acquire ABC *and* D you get much more for them, and if to this you add the true luxury item E you get considerably more. On their own the Ds and the E are worth nothing; they have to supplement the basic set.

These commodities are placed on the board in their producing province at the beginning of each five year period unless there is a specific occurrence that prevents this.

ROYAL FAMILY

This trading aspect of the game hasn't changed since the early days. It worked well and provided the framework I needed. We now had a royal family that had to ensure its own continuation and it needed to obtain commodities. It also needed income. If it had some strong royal males plus a strong army it could go out and capture the producing provinces by force. In the same way it could wage combat in order to secure its trade routes. If necessary a country could build a string of castles. A castle means it doesn't matter what happens to the province in which it is located: goods can still be transported through that otherwise enemy province, the castle ensuring safe passage for troops and trade goods. But warfare was an uncertain business. Kings especially could not normally safely leave their capital to indulge in prolonged foreign wars. If they were generally popular and were doing well it was easier but if they were not too high in the popularity stakes and also weren't being too successful in their campaigning there was always the possibility of domestic unrest looming over them. And if they don't at once rush back to quell it rebellion had a nasty habit of spreading.

So securing what they want by other means became important and here another major aspect of the game comes into play – the royal marriage. For each player it is essential to ensure the continuation of his dynasty. If he doesn't do so control could go to another player who can trace his monarch's ancestry back.

Also an unmarried king cannot produce princes to lead his armies. So wives are in demand – especially beautiful and healthy ones. (Even so, there are a lot of desperate marriages between pretty nasty boys and somewhat sickly girls, I might add!) Most marriages also seal a 'Marriage Contract' and if, for example, you are seeking a girl to marry the King's eldest son you can put your demands pretty high, because the player controlling the potential future queen's family stands to gain quite a bit financially when she ascends the throne. These all-important contracts can concern non-aggression, military support, money, trade rights, trade routes, land, or a mixture of the lot. They have to be carefully worded because their terms become binding for as long as both parties to the marriage survive. Players are not allowed to break the terms of a marriage contract: they would have to arrange the death of one of the parties first.

QUILL TO PARCHMENT

So crucial is the clever negotiation of these contracts that they presented one of the early problems in the game. A new player could be totally at the mercy of an old hand who easily tied him up into a contract that he subsequently came to realise he could well have done without. (France is always best played by such a persuasive player.) This is why a change was made so that at the start of the game the children are too young to be married at once. This at least gives an inexperienced player time to see what it's all about before he puts quill to parchment.

One of the features of the game is that during each five year turn each player has to announce to the rest of the players what has happened to his dynasty – who has died, who has been born and the description of a child, and so on. The death of a king or queen is, of course, a major event and the records are searched to establish the next in line in those rare cases where it is not immediately obvious. It is even possible for a player's kingdom to pass to another player who has the only direct heir, but this is rare. Legitimate claimants to the throne can be passed over, but from then on they provide a nuisance factor in the game that other players can exploit.

There were a few other aspects that were slowly modified during the early days (or years) but that was the game in essence.

As it stood it presented one important problem as I saw it, although it wasn't one that seemed to worry many of the groups that came to know it and made copies. To obtain the full feeling of this continuing

and developing dynasty it was essentially an ongoing game. During the course of a three hour game the most one could expect is that the king or queen (or both) might die and the next in line ascend the throne but it wouldn't go much farther than that. The true essence of the game, though, was the continuation of the family and its ramifications as it married into other dynasties and produced children. This meant that it either had to be played for a long time or it was best played as an ongoing game by the same group (the winner each session being the player who had best improved on his starting position). This is the way it was often played. Chronicles were kept and huge family trees maintained. It has been turned into a play by mail game in Austria and there they publish the appropriate dynastic announcements with proper obituaries on the death of an important Royal Personage. This is what the whole thing is about.

HISTORICAL EVENTS

So this was how the game stood when Games Workshop came on the scene. They had recently done an excellent job with my **Warrior Knights** and I was happy to let them have **Dynasties** as it was then called. They knew the game and were attracted to the idea of incorporating role-playing features into a traditional boardgame.

The first thing they decided to change was the name. They were rather frightened to use **Dynasties** because of the popular TV series. At the first meeting I tossed in **Blood Royal** as an alternative title, which was finally adopted but with an additional 'E'. I have noticed that continental players, obviously disliking the mixture of languages, refuse to acknowledge this final E.

Unfortunately we then started to run into a bit of trouble and our good relations took a temporary downturn. **Warrior Knights** had been published precisely as I invented it. Well, that is not 100% correct – a few changes were made to assist production but not only were they all made by me or with my approval, but I also felt they were improvements. The GW developer for **Warrior Knights** was Albie Fiore, who had also worked on my **Dr Who** (one of GW's first boardgames) and he subsequently worked on my **Whirlwind** (FASA). By this time he had left Games Workshop and the in house developer of **Blood Royal** was somebody

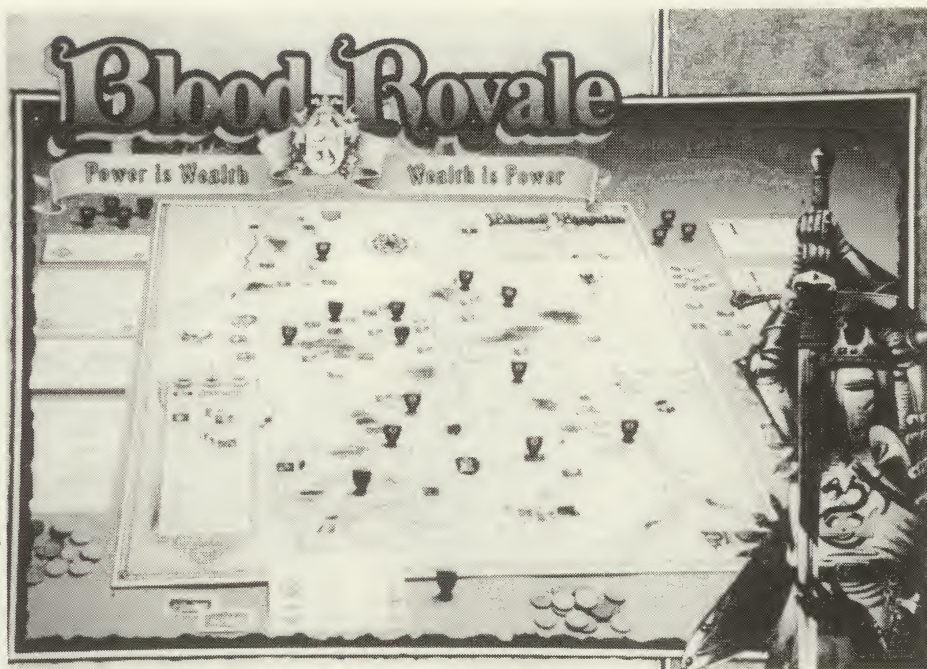


Photo: Ian Livingstone

different, and he wanted to expand the game and introduce more historical events. Although my contract allowed me to veto any changes to the original I had respect for the enthusiasm and undoubted abilities of the developer, even though I feared the additions would lengthen an already long game. But the big problem was that in the main the proposed additions (and they were all 'additions' as opposed to changes) were not the sort of rules I would have invented. Not that they were bad in themselves, they simply reflected the sort of game the developer would have invented and not the sort of game I like.

Let me give an example to illustrate the different approaches. Games Workshop wanted to introduce a series of historical events in the form of chance cards. These were to be events that often affected (usually adversely) one player. Of course, they were not as crude as 'Go to Jail', but you know what I mean. They also mirrored historical events. While I was not totally against the idea of these events I wanted them to have considerably more interest and add to the fun of the game. I also wanted them to be different from the sort of thing people are used to. My feelings are that historical events happen because a certain regime either takes a certain action (one out of a number of possibilities) at a certain time, or decides to take no action at all. If at a particular moment a contrary decision had been made the course of history would have been changed in some way. What we see as history, therefore, is the result of one decision out of a number of possible decisions taken at the time and in my game we were *living in the time*.

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

So, to get back to the game, I suggested that firstly, we should try to restrict events so that they affect *all* players, and secondly, that the event should be in the form of an intelligence report listing what could happen in, say, two to three turns: i) if no action was taken, ii) the chances of averting this occurrence if more money was directed into the area (money that might be in short supply), iii) the chances of suppressing the event by stationing troops in the area, and so on. The 'chances' would be expressed in terms of die roll odds. After all, these are the sort of questions a ruler would have to ask at the time and he would decide on the action to take in the light of the replies, the odds of success, and the effect on his exchequer, stability, and so on. So in game terms it would mean that the player would do what he thought most expedient and possible and he would have to await the outcome. At the same time other players who have no love for him (and no contract preventing intervention) could, possibly, lessen his chances of success by taking certain actions themselves.

The developer saw my point but sadly our minds didn't run along the same lines. Certain modifications were made, but generally speaking I thought the event cards at the end of the day didn't really reflect the original thinking I was aiming for. I preferred to offer the game as I invented it and leave it to enthusiasts to extend it as they wished as a result of play and the preferences of their own group.

As it was clear that we were thinking quite differently and time was being consumed it was finally agreed to publish the

game in my basic form with the new rules being included as 'Optionals' to be used or discarded by the purchaser as he or she wished. In this way I was able to give Game Workshop *carte blanche* with these additions, without further reference back to me. It is pertinent to add at this stage that it is rare for publishers to agree to allow an inventor to veto any changes. He normally has no control whatsoever over the product that finally arrives on the shelves, which might be quite unlike his original. An amazing situation when you come to think about it.


FOREIGN PRINCES

The solution reached was quite satisfactory. As far as the production was concerned they made a truly superb job of it. I must admit that I took exception to the box cover, which didn't reflect the feel of

the game at all, and it was rather sad that GW scored an own goal by deciding to suggest names for foreign princes and princesses – presumably for the benefit of players whose knowledge was limited in this regard – and getting them wrong! But these are peripherals. No inventor could be anything but delighted with the quality of the product offered, right down to such often overlooked details as the magnificent presentation of the rules, which excellently carried through the historical feel of the game. These are the qualities that show Games Workshop at their best, and they deserve every compliment.

In its basic form **Blood Royal** presents a system that is ideal for building on and I know a number of groups have developed additional rules bringing in the power of the Church, rules that have qualities that appeal to their particular group and have

stood the test of playing over a period, being slowly refined in the process. This is excellent and what I hoped would happen.

While one must be pleased in one respect, it is also a pity that **Blood Royal** appeared just before GW made the decision to turn exclusively to the fantasy games with which they are normally associated and which (as a result of their *White Dwarf* readership) had been far more profitable for them than their ventures into non-fantasy and comic strip themes. Having made this decision it reflects greatly to their credit that they pushed ahead with **Blood Royal** in the quality that they did, it being no small investment. 

Although deleted from the catalogue, copies of Blood Royal can still be found at some Games Workshop branches.

BOOK REVIEW

How To Launch Your Own Board Game

WRITTEN BY
DIANE J BAINBRIDGE

PUBLISHED BY
LONGBRIDGE ENTERPRISES

PRICE £7.95



It's difficult to review something with such a fatally flawed premise as this. Given the number of recent bankruptcies, a more useful tome would have been 'Why Not To Release Your Own Board Game'.

The author is the designer of the game **Jump Off**, which, like many such offerings, originated from Ms Bainbridge's profession, in this case showjumping. The introduction outlines the author's attempt to get the big games companies interested in her project, and the subsequent failure which led her to the do-it-yourself approach. Unfortunately when it comes to handing out advice, Ms Bainbridge ploughs straight into the water jump. Inviting designers to 'get a patent if you think it's necessary' is all very well, but

what she doesn't say is that patenting is a very expensive process and has to be done on a country by country basis. The easiest method is to simply mail your notes and rules back to yourself. The postmark will stand up in any court. That information in itself could, perhaps, have eliminated almost an entire chapter, but Ms Bainbridge shares the paranoia of most small time games inventors: 'Do not forget that you must tell all your friends and family not to tell anyone else about the game. At this stage everything should be kept as confidential as possible,' she advises, as though the world is awash with treacherous fiends, whose sole aim in life is to steal an idea for a game, the publication of which will result in almost certain bankruptcy.

CAVALIER

Later on in the book it is suggested that the embryo designer should: 'Do some market research', though no help is given as to what form that should take, and more importantly, how expensive it is. The rest of the book continues in the same mode: occasional moments of common sense, but little hard information. What there is seems curiously dated; although the copyright date of the book is listed as 1989, the author still talks of the 'London

Games Fair' as though it were a going concern, when the first show in 1987 was a disaster, and the proposed follow up was cancelled amid much acrimony in 1988. The names and addresses of manufacturers also have a dated ring, though this is altogether more understandable as companies come and go at an alarming rate in this business. What is not acceptable is the cavalier attitude towards punctuation in the book. This is not as pedantic as it may sound. Firstly, it reduces comprehension, and secondly, it undermines the author's credibility when she writes of the 'importance of presentation'.

£7.95 for 13 pages does not seem much of a bargain by any standards, especially when you consider the information provided is unlikely to result in even such a modest investment being recouped. Even if there is need for a book on this subject, this is not it.

Brian Walker

Available from Longbridge Enterprises, Woodhouse Farm, Rufforth Airfield, Rufforth, York, YO2 3QA.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Old bones, new bodies

Bruce Whitehill, the Big Game Hunter, continues his survey of the origins of the American board game.

Parker Brothers has its share of classic games which were acquired from other companies or outside inventors. **Monopoly** and **Clue** continue to be two of the best known games in the United States, with the former known also throughout the world. **Monopoly**, the classic game of banking and buying property, was invented by Charles Darrow in 1933 and sold to Parker Brothers in 1935. It has been argued that **Monopoly** was actually taken from **The Landlord's Game**, which was patented in 1904 by Elizabeth Magie; Parker credited Magie with **The Landlord's Game** and manufactured it in 1939 through the mid-1940s, at the same time its **Monopoly** sales were booming.

Incidentally, the 1933/34 **Monopoly** has Chas Darrow's name next to the jail space. In the earliest version, some of the rules are slightly different, the property cards are larger, one colour, and printed on one side, and the instructions tell the player to use as tokens common household items such as a coin or button – the now universally recognised car, hat, iron, shoe, ship and thimble were not provided. In the early Parker games, by the way, the thimble was inscribed 'For a Good Girl Only'. An original Darrow **Monopoly**, drawn on oil cloth and the only one known to be in existence, recently sold for \$31 000 – the highest price ever paid for an American game!

Clue, less celebrated than its big business counterpart, nonetheless has the distinction of being the first game to be made into a movie! It came from England in 1948 as **Cluedo**, and was licensed to Par-

ker Brothers as **Clue**, **The Sherlock Holmes Game**. Parker bought the game in 1949, and the Sherlock Holmes name was dropped. Though **Monopoly** has remained virtually unchanged over the years (except for the wood houses and hotels being replaced by plastic ones), **Clue** has gone through several major graphic revisions.

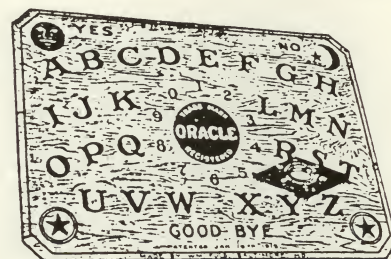
A device for telling fortunes has made a few fortunes of its own within the game industry. The **Ouija** board is said to date back to the time of Pythagoras, around 540 BC. Its success in the United States is attributed to William Fuld, who began to popularise the device in 1892 when he bought the rights from Elijah Bond. Bond had received a patent on the **Ouija** only a year earlier. Parker Brothers purchased the rights to the game in 1966.

The history – and controversy – of the **Ouija Board** is interesting. The name 'Ouija' comes from the French *Oui* and the German *Ja*, both of which mean 'Yes'. According to Stoker Hunt in his 1985 book, *Ouija: The Most Dangerous Game*, the 'planchette', the small, usually heart-shaped object which was pushed or 'floated' on top of the board, was invented by a French spiritualist, M Planchette, in 1853. Planchette's planchette had three legs, one of which was a pencil, and would write messages as it moved on top of a piece of paper. Around the turn of the century, Selchow & Righter manufactured The Scientific Planchette, which had two castors and a pencil. The information sheet stated: 'From the Original Pattern. First made in 1860.' The notice continues: 'That Planchette is capable of giving a large amount of amusement, is beyond doubt, nor is it less likely to afford instruction and a wide field for speculation and experiment to the scien-

tific.' The instruction sheet for the Wireless-Messenger, manufactured by The Wm W Wheeler (Publishing) Co of Meriden, Conn, around the turn of the century, reads: '. . . the pointer will usually move by its own power . . . giving messages which many claim to be from the dead . . . Judge of their truthfulness for yourself'.

While a game to some, the **Ouija** is claimed by others to be a means of communication with the spirit world. The question of whether the **Ouija** board was a game or a 'Mystic Oracle' was raised in 1920 by the Internal Revenue Service. According to Hunt, the IRS contended that the object was in fact a game and was therefore taxable, while the Baltimore Talking Board Company claimed that the **Ouija** board was 'a form of amateur mediumship'. The IRS won.

Pente, popularised in the US by Parker Brothers after the company's purchase of the game in 1984, is a variant of a number of board games that were played in the orient centuries ago. **Pente** was revived in the US in 1977 by Gary Gabrel of Pente Games in Stillwater Oklahoma. The introduction to the 1977 set of instructions says that '**Pente** is actually one outstanding variation among several closely related board games . . . [among them] Go, Ninuki-Renju, and Go-Moku'.



Made in two sizes: 13x19 inches, 15x22 inches
"Oracle" THE HINDU LUCK BOARD
Mystifying and Amusing


WILLIAM FULD, 1226-1228-1306 No. Central Avenue, Baltimore, Md.
Patentee and Manufacturer of "Ouija" Talking Boards, Parlor "Return Pool"

The Ladies Home Journal for December, 1911

The Delight of Winter Evenings

You can't imagine the CHARM and INTEREST of ROOK till you play it—till you get a taste of its excitement, amusement, cleverness, luck, skill.

It's irresistible!



The GAME of
ROOK

It fits into more leisure moments in THE FAMILY than any other game ever invented. Its fascination grows. You come back to it each time with fresh pleasure. Any number from three to eight can play it. It is one of the very few good games that three, or five or six can play. It is very popular for an ODD number of players.

OTHER SPECIALIZED GAMES are played with these 96 handsome cards. SEVERAL ARE FOR CHILDREN (and they love them), some are SOLITAIRE for one person, some are for TWO (a man and his wife, a couple of young people, a boy and his chum), some are for 3, 4, 5, 7, or 8, as may be present. There are games for ALL TASTES and ALL AGES, and you get all this when you get ROOK. Beautifully colored, highly enamelled cards of finest quality.

50 Cents

PARKER BROTHERS, Inc.
Sole Makers of ROOK, PIT, Ping-Pong, Pastime Picture Puzzles, etc.
Salem, Massachusetts, or Flitton Bldg., New York
19 Iron Lane, London

of the famous magazine, premiered in 1979.

The company's triumvirate of classic card games includes **Flinch**, **Pit** and **Rook**. **Flinch** was first published by the Flinch Card Company of Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1902. **Pit** was brought out in 1904, and **Rook** in 1906. **Flinch** was apparently sold by Parker beginning in 1904, though it was still being manufactured by the Flinch Card Company. Parker Brothers' 100th anniversary calendar states: 'By 1904... Parker Brothers were also on the move as it introduced...

Flinch, which outsold any card game previously published.' However, in 1913, the game of **Flinch**, with a revised copyright, still listed the Flinch Card Company as 'sole manufacturers', and the 1934 (and possibly 1935) Sears Roebuck catalogue picture of the game also showed the Flinch Card Company. Parker Brothers bought the company in 1936.

Parker Brothers' newest classic game, **Mille Bourne**, was based on the game of **Touring**. **Touring**, produced by the Wallie Dorr Company in 1925, ranked with **Authors** and **Old Maid** as one of the most popular card games of all time.

Touring was bought by Parker Brothers, and kept in the line till 1975. G

Bruce Whitehill rounds off this series next issue.



PIT
For laughter, excitement and a general good time, PIT has no equal. PIT and QUIT are the two largest selling and most popular games in the world. Price 2s.; fine edition, 2s. 6d.

About the author

Bruce Whitehill is one of the world's leading authorities on American games. Known also as 'The Big Game Hunter', he has the largest diversified collection of antique American games in the world - over 350 US game companies represented from 1840 to 1960. He is currently working on a book on the the history of American games.

The object of **Go-Moku** is to place five stones in a row on the intersections of lines that make up an 18 by 18 grid. **Pente** is played the same way, with the addition of a rule that allows players to capture an opponent's pieces. According to R C Bell, **Go-Moku**, known in England as **Spoils Five**, was introduced to Europe around 1885. It is also known by another name: **Go-Bang** was listed as a 'new' game in the McLoughlin Brother's 1887 catalogue.

Sorry was introduced by Parker Brothers in 1934. Originating from England, it's one of many games considered a variation on **Pachisi**. What makes **Sorry** different, primarily, is that movement around the board is governed by numbers shown on cards, rather than by dice.

In addition to the classics it has acquired over the years, Parker Brothers continues to offer a number of its own well-known board games which have been around for the last two to three decades. **Risk**, which was first sold in 1959, became one of only two territorial war simulation games to be embraced by the general public after the Second World War (**Diplomacy** being the other). The name 'Risk', incidentally, was suggested by a Parker salesman, the letters R, I, S and K being the combined first initials of his four grandchildren.

Another game, **Masterpiece**, which was first published in 1971, was taken out of the line for a number of years and has now resurfaced. **Payday**, one of very few financial games to make it since **Monopoly**, was developed in 1975, and **Boggle**, one of the best word games ever made, was brought out in 1976. Finally, the **Mad Magazine** game, which boxed the lunacy



71, Brewer Street, Piccadilly Circus, London W1R 3FB
Telephone: 01-437 0761 or 734 6124 Fax: 01-437 4541

LONDON'S ORIGINAL GAMES SHOP

Some of our highly recommended games			
Ave Caesar	£24.95	Malawi	£17.95
Die Macher	£24.95	McMulti	£28.95
Borsenspiel	£19.95	A La Carte	£19.95
Six Day Race	£17.95	City	£18.95
Doolittle & Waite	£ 8.95	Ausbrecher	£ 9.95
Black Monday	£ 9.95	Maestro	£16.95

COMING SOON

Affenbande, Goldrausch, Pater Noster, Ben Hur, Holiday AG, Casanova, Noblese Oblige, Favoriten, Karawane, Cash, Dicke Kartoffeln, Digging, Gespenster, Wabant.

Send 9" x 9" SAE or 24p stamp for Free Catalogue and imports listing

MAIL ORDER SERVICE AVAILABLE
Phone or write for details







Put On Your Thinking Cap.

The Ultimate World War III Battle Scenario Is Here.

Whether you're an aspiring five star general or you just enjoy a great strategy game, you'll love the action and realism of RED STORM RISING™ and THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™ board games from TSR.

Based on the novels by best selling author Tom Clancy, RED STORM RISING and THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER games test your skills as a military strategist. You control the action. In the RED STORM RISING game, players command the land and air forces of the Warsaw Pact and NATO countries in the climactic struggle for control of Europe. In THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER game, players live the adventure of submarine and naval warfare searching for the elusive Soviet nuclear submarine. Both games can be played separately *or together* to create the ultimate World War III battle scenario. Each game features a full-color, tri-fold board with hundreds of military playing pieces, background and equipment notes and game scenarios. A basic set of rules makes start-up easy. And the advanced rules will challenge even the most avid strategy game player.

So man your battle stations and put on your thinking caps. RED STORM RISING™ and THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER™ games are now available at a toy, hobby or book store near you.



TSR Ltd, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB. Tel: (0223) 212517.

The TSR logo is a trademark owned by TSR, Inc.

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER © 1988 Naval Institute Press.
All Rights Reserved.

© 1989 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved

RED STORM RISING is a trademark owned by and used under license from Jack Ryan Enterprises, Ltd.
and Larry Bond. © 1988 Jack Ryan Enterprises, Ltd. and Larry Bond. All Rights Reserved.



THE GI INTERVIEW

Wolfgang Kramer

*There can be few more commercially successful games designers in the world today than Wolfgang Kramer. His **Auf Achse** alone has sold over half a million to date, while others such as Nikki Lauder's **Formel Eins**, and **Wildlife Adventure** remain firm favourites with games players of all ages and preferences. Wolfgang took time out at the recent Essen Games to discuss how he puts it all together.*

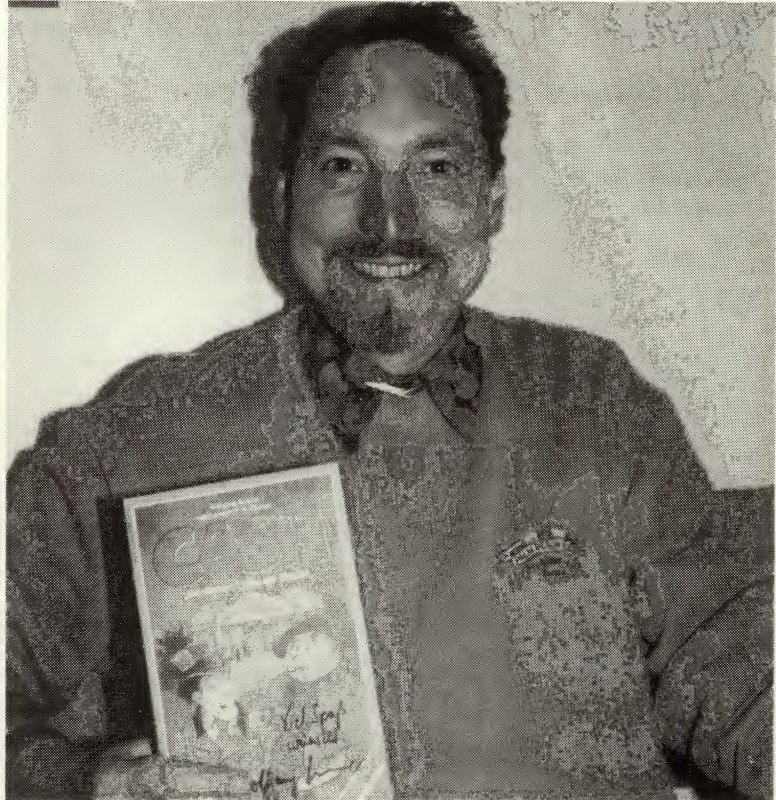


Photo: Ian Livingstone

When did you first become interested in games?

It started when I was a child. My grandma used to play with me; she always used to let me win, so I developed quite a positive feeling about games. When I reached my teens I started buying all the games I could find, though this was in the fifties so there wasn't really much around, just variations of **Monopoly** and **Scrabble**. I then started to change some of the games I bought. My friends preferred the 'new' versions and suggested I make some games of my own. At that time I didn't think I was able to, though the idea stayed with me. A few years later I started to study commercial science. In my free time I started to develop ideas for my first game. I've always liked race games, but I didn't want one where you just roll the die and move, so I had to develop a new movement system. I wrote down about twenty possibilities.

*Was this how **Tempo** was born?*

Yes, but not straight away, though **Tempo** was my first published game, in 1974 I think. **Tempo** was an abstract game using a card based movement system. It took me about a year to refine it to the state where it could be published.

A few years later I modified it and it became **Formel Eins**. The motor racing theme is not so important. The system is adaptable to virtually any form of racing.

I remember you telling me once that your design approach is system first, theme later.

Yes, that's mostly true, though in the case of **Wildlife Adventure** the theme came first.

*What about **Auf Achse**?*

Again the theme came first, because this was a promotional game originally, which was specially commissioned by a road haulage company.

What is your favourite out of all the games you have designed?

I like **Around The World in Eighty Days** a lot, and **Formel Eins**.

Although it has sold very well, **Auf Achse** is not really one of my favourites, likewise **Undercover** (**Heimlich & Co**), though they are my games so I stand behind them (laughs).

What have you got coming out next year ('90)?

One of my old games, **Coup**, is being published by FX Schmid this year with a new theme: it will be called **Holiday**. There will be a card game from Ravensburger, which I co-authored, called **Cash**, and also **Terra Iridium**, an abstract game which I did for Kosmos.

The press verdict on this year's ('89) releases was not good. The feeling was that the games were getting too simple.

Yes, I understand what you mean. Ravensburger, MB, Parker, they all want simple games. I think Ravensburger are changing, though. They want to do one or two games with a higher level which will not be so commercial.

Do you play other people's games?

Oh yes. I like Sid Sackson's games very much, and Alex Randolph's. When I'm not playing or working on my own games, I teach games.

How's that?

There is a school in my town which, like most schools, teaches lots of subjects. I am the games teacher for four evenings a year, anyway.

Do you mean teaching people to design games?

No, how to play games.

What sort of games do you use as an example?

Quite a variety, really. **Hol's Der Geier, Café International, Playboss, Hare and Tortoise.**

What kind of age group do you teach?

Just adults. I'm also in a local games clubs where we play all the new games.

You seem very thorough and professional in your approach.

Yes, it's very important for me to see what is happening in the market, and also how the public react. I come here to Essen, I go to the Nürnberg Fair. I must know what companies are publishing, and also what the trend for the future is. Also I like to try and understand why certain games get published and others don't. I visit shops and talk to the people who sell games. In the bigger shops I organise promotional visits. I explain my own games to the customers. Some shops have special 'games days' where they have special teachers to explain the games to the public. Like with my visits, there is no money involved but they are valuable promotional exercises.

There seems to be a strong games culture in Germany.

Yes, but only in the last three or four years. In the seventies there was really nothing.

How important was Essen in this evolution?

There were several factors. The 'Game of the Year' was an important step. Also, people have more spare time now. TV too has produced a big counter reaction. Watching television is now considered very passive. With games, people come together and interact. The press picked up on this and now devote quite a lot of space to writing about games.

What are your favourite games, apart from your own?

I like to play **Acquire, Hare and Tortoise, Focus, Shark, Amazing Labyrinth**, chess too. I played **1830** just recently – quite complex but very, very good. I play all sorts of games.

And long may you continue to do so.

Wolfgang Kramer was talking to Brian Walker.



ESDEVIUM GAMES

LOW COST MAIL-ORDER SPECIALISTS —



● Come & see the BIGGEST & BEST Selection of Games in the South

Esdevium The Games Shop: 17 Station Road, Aldershot GU11 1HT

Wide selection of boards, pieces & sets for CHESS, GO, SHOGI, MAH JONG, BACKGAMMON, CITADEL, GRENADIER + PRINCE AUGUST
Fantasy and Science Fiction miniatures

Science Fiction

- Aliens (LeG) B £21.95
- Warhammer 40,000 (GW) R £15.99
- WH 40K Compendium £10.99
- Adeptus Titanicus (GW) £26.99
- Codex Titanicus £10.99
- Battlefleet Gothic (GW) £21.95
- Rogue Trooper (GW) £15.99
- Space Marine (GW) £21.95
- Space Hulk (GW) £20.99
- Deathwing (GW) £13.95
- Dark Future (GW) £21.99
- White Line Fever (GW) £8.50
- Dune (AH) £17.50
- Spice Harvest, The Duel £8.95 ea.
- Blockmania (GW) £15.99
- Megamania (GW) £8.95
- Freedom in the Galaxy (AH) £21.95
- Liftoff (TF) £20.95
- Starfleet Battles (TF), I £18.95, II & III £18.95 ea.
- Federation and Empire (TF) £31.95
- F&E Fleet Pack £11.95
- Captain's Logs 5, 6, 7 £3.95 ea.
- SSD Books 1-9 £4.95 ea.
- Supplement 2 £6.95
- Reinforcements II £5.50
- Introduction to SFB £5.50
- Battlecards
- Terrain Maps £10.95
- Megahex I, II £10.95 ea.
- Ogre Deluxe £12.95
- Ogre, GEV £4.95 ea.
- Ogre Reinforcement Pack £4.50
- Ogre Book £5.50
- Shockwave £4.50
- Battlesuit £4.95
- Starfire 1 (TF) £4.95
- Starfire (TF) Bxd £9.95
- New Empires £7.95
- Gorm Khanate Wars £6.95
- Asteroid (GDW) £7.95

Other Games

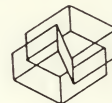
- Auction (AH) £15.95
- Acquire (AH) £21.95
- Barbara Cartland Game £11.95
- Blind Justice (AH) £21.50
- Boggle £7.95
- The Broadway Game (TSR) £15.95
- Bullwinkle & Rocky Game (TSR) £12.95
- Campaign (HPG) £14.90
- Chase (TSR) £10.95
- Cheers (TSR) £15.95
- Class Struggle (AH) £13.95
- Counter Intelligence (Zzota) £16.95
- The Crosse Game (TSR) £10.95
- Cup Fever (JS) £21.95
- Desperado (Han) £15.95
- Dinosaurs of the Lost World (AH) £18.95
- Doolittle & Waite £7.95
- Dr. Ruth's Game (Vic) £21.95
- Elixir (3 Wish) £12.95
- Family Business £8.95
- Favonien (SBV) £18.95
- 4-Word Rummy Game (Han) £11.95
- Goldrush (HiG) £8.50
- \$ Greed (AH) £3.95, (Tube) £7.95
- James Clavell's Shogun Card Game £10.95
- Hecht im Karpfenteich (SBV) £19.95
- Kings and Things £16.95
- Luck or Logic £15.95
- Mertwig's Maze (TSR) £6.50
- Grass Card Game £7.95
- Good Looking Game (AW) £17.95
- The High Rise Game (TSR) £20.95
- Image (AH) £8.95
- Interplay £8.95
- I Think You Think I Think (TSR) £16.95
- The Kage Game (TSR) £10.95
- Luck or Logic (AH) £15.95

Detective Games

- 221B Baker St. (HPG) £13.50
- Extra Case Sets 1, 2, 3 £3.95 ea.
- Cases 41-80 (Bxd) £7.99
- Sherlock Holmes — Consulting Detective £20.95
- Mansion Murders £11.95
- Queens Park Affair £11.95
- Adventures By Gaslight £11.95
- Crimebusters Vols 1-3 £5.25 ea.
- Elery Queen's Mystery Magazine Game (May) £12.95
- Nick Velvet Casebook S £4.45
- Guilty Party (SjG) £14.95
- Gumshoe (SP) £20.95
- How To Host a Murder (InG) £20.95 ea.
- The Watersdown Affair
- Grapes of Frath
- Last Train from Paris
- A Matter of Faxe
- The Chicago Caper
- Hoo Hung Woo
- Class of '54
- Powar & Greede
- Jack the Ripper £14.95
- Jamie Swize Detective Games
- Coffee House Murder, Murder in Paradise,
- Where There's a Will, Who Killed Lowell
- Weenaman £12.95 ea.
- Orient Express £19.95
- Inheritance (Party Zone) (TSR) £9.95
- Scotland Yard (Rav) £14.95
- Sleuth (AH) £6.95

Diplomatic/Economic/Political Games

- The Brotherhood (GDW) £9.95
- Campaign Trail (GDW) £14.95
- Civilisation (HT) £24.95
- (AH) £26.95, (HPG) £19.95
- Western Exp. Kit (AH) £6.95
- Civilisation Trade Cards (AH) £3.50
- Cold War (Vic) £15.95
- Die Macher
- Diplomacy (HPG) £15.90, (AH) £19.95
- Gamers' Guide to Diplomacy £3.60
- Game of Nations (HPG) £15.95
- Family Business £8.95
- Glasnost £25.95
- The Glory (Gen) £15.95
- Junta (WEG) £15.99
- Kremlin (AH) £17.50
- Expansion Cards £6.95
- Machiavelli (AH) £18.95
- Merchant of Venus (AH) £22.95
- Nuclear War (Bla) £18.95
- Nuclear Escalation (Bla) £18.95
- Pax Britannica (Vic) £20.95
- Reich (Ch) £10.95
- Risk (KP) £18.95
- Samurai (AH) £17.50
- Sceptre 1027 AD £24.95
- Speed and Steel (SGP) £10.95
- Shanghai Trader (PG) £16.95
- Stockmarket (Han) £16.95
- Superpower (GW) £13.95
- Supremacy £27.95
- Resource Deck II, Field Marshal's Handbook,
- Warlords and Pirates of the Neutral Zones
- £6.95 ea.
- Neutron Bombs & Killer Satellites £12.95
- Middle Powers £10.95
- High Tech Edge (Conventional) £9.95
- (Strategic) £14.95
- Viceroy's (TF) £26.95
- Warlord (PG) £16.95
- Westminster (HPG) £15.95



These are just some of our games. Our catalogue contains details of virtually all games available in the U.K. Send 20p in stamps & 24p s.a.e. (overseas 4 i.r.c.) for a copy (or free with orders over £8.00)

MAIL ORDER CHARGES: UK/Under £16 — Add 60p. £16 and over — post free
BFPO Under £25 — add £1.30, £25 and over — post free
Eire & Overseas Surface Mail — Add 30% (Minimum £1.30). Europe Air Mail — Add 40% (minimum £1.60).
Air mail elsewhere — add 55% minimum £2.00 except AH, HPG, MB & HT games — add 100%
Payment in Sterling please Overseas payment by Bank Draft/UK Bank Cheques/
International Giro/Access/Visa/Mastercard/Eurocard

- ◇ Special Offer
- ★ New Arrival
- R Role Playing Rules
- S Plays Solo
- B Boardgame
- M Miniature Rules



You may phone orders and pay by ACCESS/VISA



Mail Order:
ESDEVIUM GAMES (3I)
185 Victoria Road
ALDERSHOT Hants GU11 1JU
Tel: 0252 311443
or (evenings) 0252 722269

DO IT YOURSELF

SPY!

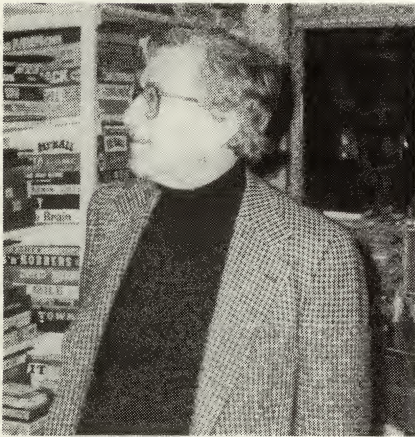


Photo: Ian Livingstone

A paper and pencil game for two players, by Sid Sackson.

Equipment

One game sheet (reproduced on graph paper or photocopied), consisting of an upper and a lower field, and a pencil for each player.

Object

To be the first to deduce the opponent's secret network of lines by sys-

tematically 'spying' on the opponent's upper field.

Preliminaries

Make two copies of the game sheet on graph paper (or by photocopying), and give one copy to each player. In the upper field of his game sheet, each player lays out a network (without letting his opponent see it) consisting of six lines – each of a different length, ranging from one to six grid unit lengths, inclusive. The lines must be drawn either horizontally or vertically, must be connected together (in any order), and must turn at right angles at each connection point. The lines may not touch each other except where one ends and another starts. Illustrations 1 and 2 show networks that have been laid out correctly. Illustration 3 shows an incorrectly drawn network.

Play

1. One player spies by asking the opponent about the contents of a space in the opponent's field (such as

1A, 2B and so on). If there is a line – or two connecting lines – in that space, the opponent announces: 'hot'. If there is no line in that space, but it is adjacent to a space containing a line, the opponent announces: 'warm'. Squares which touch diagonally are not considered adjacent for this purpose. In all other cases, the opponent announces: 'cold'. The opponent then asks about the contents of a space and the first player replies, thereby completing a round.

2. Each player uses the lower field on his game sheet for keeping track of information he obtains by spying.

3. In any round a player may, instead of spying on a single space, spy on from two to five connected spaces belonging to a single horizontal or vertical row. Whenever a player makes use of multiple spying, he must cross out below his upper field a square containing a number equal to the number of squares spied upon that turn. A player whose six numbered squares have all been crossed out may no longer use multiple spying, and the

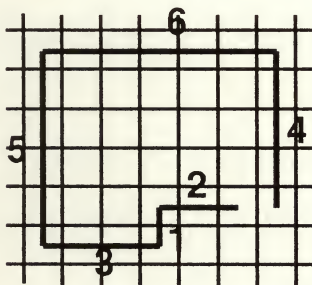


Illustration 1

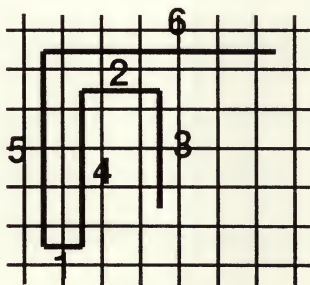


Illustration 2

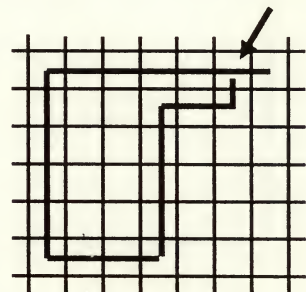


Illustration 3

opponent should keep track of this by using the squares under his own lower field.

Winning

At the end of any round either or both players may try to reconstruct their opponent's network. A correct reconstruction counts as a single victory for the player. An incorrect reconstruction counts as a double victory for the

opponent. (Thus it is possible for a tie to occur or for one player to win as much as a triple victory.) A player who has made an incorrect secret construction or given the opponent incorrect information automatically loses.

Note

If the horizontal two-unit line in Illustration 1 were moved one grid unit to the right and connected with the four-

unit line rather than the one-unit line, identical information would be obtained from spying. In such a case, either reconstruction would be considered correct.

Variation

Advanced players may agree to use more lines. Even the addition of an extra one-unit line greatly increases the strategic complexity. G

Copyright © Sid Sackson. This game originally appeared in Games magazine and is reprinted with permission.

Upper Field

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												

5	4	3	3	2	2
---	---	---	---	---	---

Lower Field

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												

5	4	3	3	2	2
---	---	---	---	---	---

NEXT ISSUE

Another do-it-yourself game from Sid Sackson.

Risk Feature

Horse Racing Feature

Victory in the Pacific strategy seminar.

IN REVIEW

Aliens
Lone Wolf and Cub

WARGAMES

Battles of Napoleon
Red Barricades

ROLEGAMES

Shadowrun
Dreamchipper,
DNA/DNA and Street
Samurai
Paranoia Crash Course
Manual

COMPUTER GAMES

Hound of Shadow
Space Quest III
Harpoon



Long Cours

Derek Carver

In my article last issue in which I drew your attention to **Mediterranean**, I said that whenever I overlooked an extremely good game it was not because it was published by some small and unknown firm, but because it was hidden away in the catalogues of one of the industry's giants, obscured from view by a multitude of games not worth a first glance, let alone a second.

It is interesting that **Mediterranean** was by Parker. My next choice comes from the same firm but this time from its continental cousins. I first encountered **Long Cours** (invented by Renée Pion) in Paris several years ago where it was being remaindered. I must admit I didn't take much notice of it. It was just another presumably slight 'fun for all the family' game as far as I was concerned. But I was asked to buy a copy for a friend's collection so duly obliged on my next trip.

Needless to say, by the time we got round to playing it and realised what a splendid game it was, it had disappeared from the French shelves. So it was on my 'wanted' list.

What I did not know at the time was that it had also been published by Parker in Germany under the title **Käpt'n und Pirat**, which is pretty easy to get hold of on the second hand market. Given a choice, the French version is more attractively produced, but the German version is OK.

THAT SINKING FEELING

The board depicts a map of the world with various resource locations linked by shipping routes. The map is also divided into six segments. To start the game each player is given a ship, some cash and a hand of cards. The game mechanic is pretty simple but unusual. Players acquire resources in order to sell them again and make money; they make money in order to acquire the Pirate Ship; they acquire the Pirate Ship in order to sink their opponents and win the game.

Players move from port to port buying and selling different types of commodity.

During each turn a player rolls a die; this is not to aid movement but to determine which of the six commodities he can sell on that turn. So it is beneficial to have a spread of commodities if you wish to have a regular income.

Tactics come in the playing of the cards. If a player plays a Storm card from his hand all ships in the segment on which it is played are wrecked and have to deposit any resources they were carrying on the Beaching Area for that segment. These can be picked up by the first player to arrive there in his turn – normally the person who played the card, of course. The wrecked player re-enters the game in a randomly determined segment on his next turn.

Other cards allow Captains to fight one another. They fight by playing progressively stronger cards until one concedes defeat. The victor takes all of the vanquished opponent's money. But at the heart of the game is the control of the Pirate Ship. During his turn a player may ask for the Pirate Ship to be put up for auction. He usually does this when he feels he is probably in the strongest financial position at that moment – a somewhat transitory situation! The successful bidder takes control of the ship and can in-




roduce it into the game whenever he wishes. It enters the board in a randomly determined segment. Beginning with the next turn, it is moved in the owning player's turn in addition to his own ship, but it moves three times as far as a normal ship. The Pirate Ship sinks all opposing ships it lands on or moves through! The players owning the sunk ships are out of the game and they hand all of their cash to the owner of the Pirate Ship. But the Pirate Ship can be sunk by a Storm card and then it is out of the game until it is put up for auction again.

GETTING WRECKED

It can be seen that the Storm cards perform two functions. Wrecking opponents' ships is a way to get resources to earn money to buy the Pirate Ship, but these same cards are, in turn, a player's only defence against the Pirate. Naturally enough, all players hope that they can hold out long enough until another player's nerve goes and he uses one of his own Storm cards to sink the Pirate to the benefit of all, of course.

The game as published has one weakness. It can be seen from the above that the winner of the game must be the player who owns the Pirate Ship right at the very end when there are no more Storm cards in the hands of his opponent(s). So all you have to do is count how many have been played. While this is tactical it produces an extremely downbeat ending, which is probably why such a potentially good game appears so often on the second hand market.

I overcame this by introducing the rule that when the cards are initially dealt (there are quite a number of different cards in addition to Storm cards) an additional hand is dealt (rounded down when there are not quite enough). This takes a number of cards out of the game and as a third of the cards are Storm cards it is therefore impossible to know precisely when the final Storm card has been played, so you have to play to dominate the end-game generally and not just the final turn. We have also introduced a rule that the minimum bid for the Pirate Ship has to be 6 million.

Käpt'n und Pirat, or Long Cours if you can locate a copy, is worth seeking out as its game system is not only unique but thoroughly enjoyable. 

DESERT ISLAND GAMES

Sunken treasures

Long John Humphries

When our editor invited me to visit his desert island with ten games of my choice, my initial inclination was to choose from the magnum opuses of the games world, or those that have received great critical acclaim, or even games which regularly top the popularity polls. Then I thought no, this is to be my personal choice, why should I try to impress the readers. So I decided to open my sea chest and fill it with the games that I most enjoy playing regardless.

To select just ten games from the scores that I have played and enjoyed over the years proved to be a much more difficult task than I first envisaged. After much consideration, deliberation and second thoughts, I finally arrived at my top ten. When I read through the list, I realised that many of the games are far from well known and probably long out of production. Perhaps this says something about the majority of recent games that have been foisted upon the unsuspecting public.

HORSE FEATHERS

My first choice was easy. The one game that has given my family, friends and I many hours of pleasure, and I hope will

continue to do so when I eventually get off this wretched island is **Jockey** (Ravensburger). As its name suggests this is a horse racing game. The four horses are moved round the track by playing cards which refer to specific horses either by their colour or their current position in the race. Before each race, players place their bets, using the cards that they have been dealt as a guide. There are various combinations of betting which determine the odds. Instead of great wads of paper money floating around, each player's financial position is shown by numbered discs on a chart in the centre of the board. The delights of this game are that it is simple to learn coupled with the wide range of tactics involved in the actual races. For me, a true number one.

The rest of my selection is not in priority order, so here goes. In my humble opinion one of the best property games produced so far is **Chalet** (ASS). The colourful board depicts an area of suburbia. Players move their pieces along the streets buying both undeveloped and developed sites. In addition players may obtain building loans, mortgages and credits. They can build on undeveloped plots, receive an annual income and rents and insure against disasters. Income and rents can be increased by the event cards. It may sound simplistic, but believe me a lot of thought and planning is required to have a chance of winning.



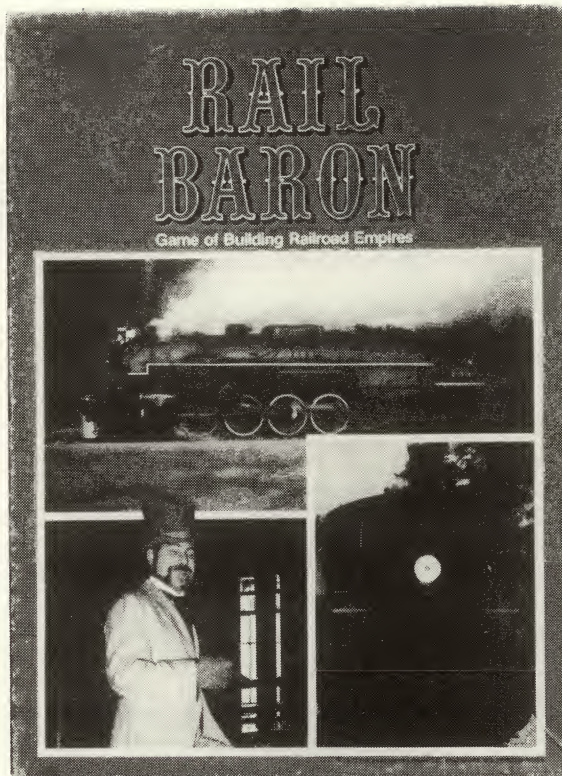
Which business game should I pack? Once you have fathomed out the rules, **Capital Power** (International Team) has a lot of merit as does **Speculate** (Waddingtons) and several other stock market games. However, I finally plumped for **Fortune** (Ariel) as it incorporates a wide range of activities and was well produced. It won over **Business** (Edi-

tions Fenwick) purely on the grounds of language.

GREEN POWER

Another favourite of mine is **Bigwig** (Explorations Inc). This is an American political game where each player represents a lobby such as Ecology, Farming, Education and so on, and attempts to move up the political ladder from State through federal to the Campaign Trail. This involves a great deal of wheeling and dealing between the players and even allows you to move your opponents' pieces on the board. Great fun as long as it is not taken too seriously.

The next game on my list I discovered quite recently lurking on the bottom shelf of a small toy shop in a local country town. **Power Barons** (Milton Bradley) is another game involving player interaction. At the start of the game each player controls a quarter of the world. The object is to gain control of two territories in each opponents' region. This is achieved either by amassing wealth and buying control or by challenging. Each card has a value and a colour representing one of the four regions. In addition they are divided into four suits each representing a resource: transport, communications and so on. There is also a fifth suit of political power cards. To challenge, the player lays one card of the colour of the region being challenged and of the resource suit that the player wishes to place in the territory. The challenged player then places a card. Players then continue to lay cards of any colour or resource, up to a maximum of four each. A fifth round of political power cards may then be laid. The winner is the player who has placed cards of the highest total value. However, either player can surrender at any time and although losing the challenge, will conserve his cards. Tactically it may be



wise to surrender early and so preserve cards for later challenges. Again, lots of fun with everyone involved.

My choice for a quiz game was simple. **Echelon** (The Great Games Company) stands head and shoulders above the competition. Players read and try to memorise an extract from literature on which they will be questioned during the game in order to gain enough points to win. Apart from being an excellent game requiring strategy as well as memory, the 286 extracts will provide me with plenty of reading material.

ON THE TRACKS

Naturally when considering railway games **1829** was high on my preliminary list, but I finally decided to take **Rail**

Baron (Avalon Hill). It is a clean, comparatively simple game with not too many components to blow away when the hurricanes hit the island. I must include **Scotland Yard** (Ravensburger), because apart from being a great game, should I ever feel homesick I can open the board and study the map of London and realise how lucky I am to be on a desert island.

Although I have played a number of wargames, I am not a buff, so the closest I come to selecting a game of this genre is **Pax Britannica** (Victory Games). I am interested in the historical period, the Colonial era from 1860 to the Great War, and I like the economic element. For me it is quite a complex game, but given

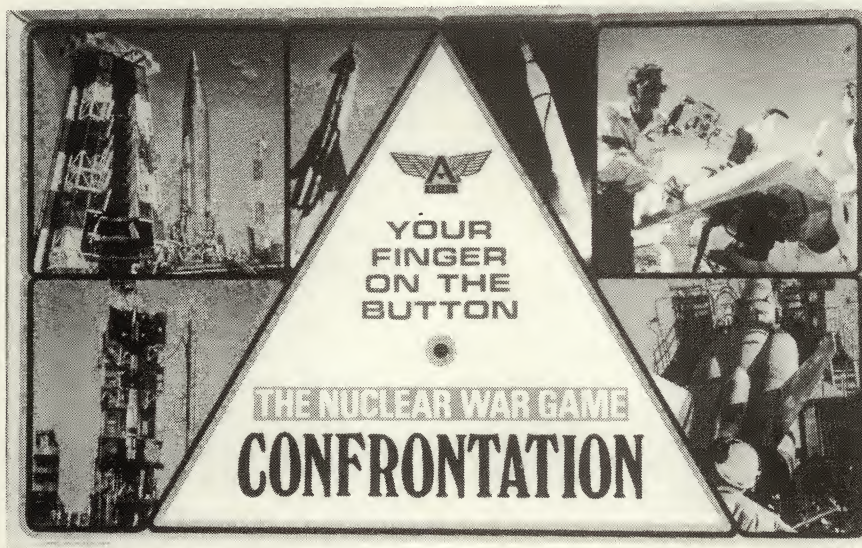
time I might become reasonably proficient.

My final choice is for personal reasons. I was one of a small team who designed **Confrontation** (Ariel). The game is about winning territories and is loosely based on nuclear warfare. Although I say it myself, the game has a number of interesting features. Unfortunately when it was produced in the mid-1970s, the poor quality of the components did little to induce prospective purchasers. (Perhaps our editor will allow me to expand upon this game in a later issue.)

Of course I gave much consideration to **Acquire** and **Civilisation** but so many copies of these have already been taken to the island, there must still be one in playable condition. I was also reluctant to leave **TV Wars**, **Administrative Waltz** and **Hare & Tortoise** on my shelves, but I guess I can't take everything.

Assuming that I already have **The Bible** and **Shakespeare** (the works of, that is, not the game) I would try to find space for R C Bell's *The Board Game Book* as this would give me a few more games to play should I get bored with my selection. GI

Next issue's castaway (weather permitting): Dave Morris.



FAIRS REPORTS

Fair cop or fair flop?

EARL'S COURT TOY AND HOBBY FAIR

JANUARY
27-31, 1990

Imagine you are in a giant games shop and could make but one purchase. Which game would you choose? This is the question we put to our writers attending the Earl's Court Toy Fair.

Derek Carver

My draconian editor has allocated me the task of treating this year's Toy Fair as some bumper Games Shop, displaying brand new wares. Which game would I have bought? Not wanting a Monopoly variant nor any game where I have to answer questions means I can rule out the majority of the new products, which makes things a bit easier. Nor is it possible to delve into every game from so many unknown sources, so I might easily have missed a gem.

From what I saw my choice would have been, I think, **Battle of Britain** by TSR. Certainly TSR know about games – a rare quality at Earl's Court – so the product immediately has good pedigree. I say 'would have been' because it is all a bit premature. Unfortunately there wasn't enough of it on show to make a conclu-

sive choice. Just a preliminary showing of the board plus a few bits pinned up on the wall. No rules and no play summary. But if it lives up to its promise there could be a good game there. More will be revealed in August apparently.

My personal accolade has to go to **Cloak and Dagger**. Any visitor to the Toy Fair missing it could certainly be excused for doing so. It's in a small box with almost all the rigidity of a packet of cigarettes (the cheaper brands). But the game inside seems to owe nothing to any game known to me, and I don't mean that disparagingly.

It is for two to six players and comprises a small patience-sized cards and twenty numbered envelopes. Each player is represented by two cards – a cloak and a dagger. These are inserted into one of the envelopes, which live in the stand-up (well, almost stand-up) 'box'. During the course of play other cards are put into the envelopes and cards are transferred from envelope to envelope. According to the circumstances this is either done totally secretly or one of the cards is revealed to the rest of the players. Also, the displaying of a hazard card from an envelope can force other players to pass over information about their own cards. The object of the game is to end up with an envelope in your hand containing the cards 'Secret Plans', 'Private Reports' and 'Coded Messages' together with your own (and no other player's) cloak and dagger cards. You must also be out of cards yourself at the time.

How it plays is the thing, of course, and of this I've no idea. It could be great or it could be a dead loss, which is a chance you always take when buying any totally unknown game. But I'm sure you will agree it is something completely different, and *that*, for Earl's Court, is something completely different.

Cloak and Dagger is made by Eye-Spy Enterprises and should retail for between £3 and £4.

Nigel Suckling

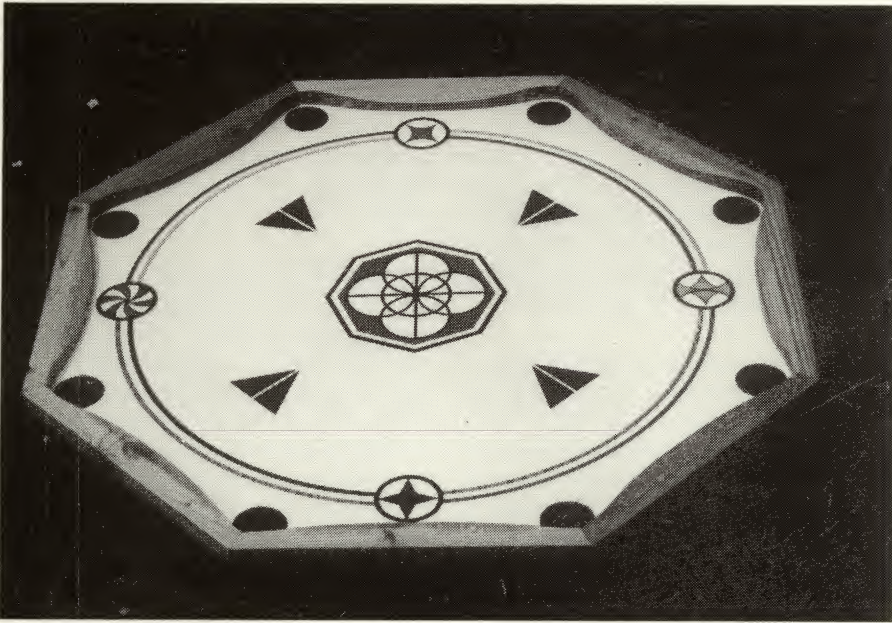
Ambling round the Press Room at the Earl's court show this week with a *Games International* label pinned to my chest, I was accosted on all sides by people anxious for the opinion of this august journal on their wares.

This was rather disconcerting at first, me not having anticipated the magnetism of a Press badge. Then it became quite entertaining, but on two occasions I was impressed enough by the games I was shown to feel a twinge of guilt about my assumed power.

In defence I must say that I did carefully, if imprecisely, explain that I was only there in a secondary capacity and could not guarantee a cursory review of the items. However, I was given the full treatment anyway so it occurred to me that the least I can do in return is bring them to your attention.

The first is the beautifully made **Taxido**. If you imagine Pool being played on an eight-cornered (and pocketed) table with discs instead of balls, you will get a rough idea of how the game operates.

The comparison with Pool is readily suggested by the makers themselves because their unashamed intention was to do to the popular India game Carrom what Pool did to Snooker, that is, liven it up a bit and widen its appeal. This they have achieved by chopping the corners off the original square board, thus doubling the number of pockets, and tinkering with the rules. The claim is that this not only speeds up the game but increases its subtlety by increasing the number of options in any go. Personally I don't think it matters because



have you tried playing Snooker on a full-sized table lately?

The real question is, I suppose, how many people would choose to buy **Taxido** instead of a similarly priced Snooker or Pool table? Well, I would for one if only because I would be getting a proper game instead of a toy version of something else. It also happens that I used to play both Carrom and Snooker in my youth and liked them equally, so there is every reason to suppose that **Taxido** works as well as its makers claim.

However, I don't claim to speak for any large and recognisable wedge of the population, and the question is also a shade hypothetical because Indus Leisure games are in the uncomfortable position of being unsure whether to pray for fistfuls of orders or a bigger company to take their baby off their hands and make it a sensation.

The other game – **Chess 2000** – ('Ah, *Games International*, just the man I want to see!') attracted me almost despite the effusions of the rep, who explained that the inventor was too bashful to plug his own brain child and was off roaming the exhibition.

At first sight the game looks much like any other chess set after about ten pints of Young's Special. Closer examination reveals the cause to be the presence of 13 squares along each side plus a few extra Queens, Bishops, Knights and pawns. Also the squares are a variety of pastel colours which are echoed on the pieces' pedestals.

The basic rules of chess have been only slightly modified to match the larger format, but what makes this more than a

simple expansion of chess is a change in the game's objective. Each King must try to occupy his opponent's starting square. Add to this a rule that a King cannot be captured in the normal way, only returned to his starting square, and a whole new dimension is added to the game.

Whether, as the makers claim, this transforms it into a 'fun' game is debatable. Their argument is that because there are no manuals of tactics everyone can play on an equal footing, which has some validity (at least until the appearance of any such manual) but this is surely only a short term effect. The game remains one of pure strategic skill and any two chess players who sat down to a tournament would almost certainly soon re-establish their relative strengths, would they not?

It all depends on how much credit one gives to learning over natural ability in chess-like games. Personally I go for the headstart-only theory, but this may still

leave a comfortable niche for **Chess 2000** as a lively and valid diversion for chess-lovers. Whether it could become more than that will depend, I suspect, on large numbers of standard chess players suddenly reaching its boredom threshold.

There, conscience satisfied. On reflection, the games have quite a lot in common apart from the obvious sincerity behind them. It would be nice to believe there is a place for them in the commercial shark pool.

Ian Livingstone

With unflagging determination to find new games to add to my collection, I went to Earl's Court to discover what gems were being released at the Toy Fair. I walked up and down between the corporate aisles for two days becoming more and more depressed. Word games and TV tie-ins continue to poison the British games industry; look out for the new Aneka Rice game and more useless soap opera games. Upstairs on Death Row, where individuals misguidedly launch games with sad delusions of creating the new **Monopoly**, the lonely figures pounce on anybody who walks within 10 metres of their coffin sized stands. Filled with pity, I felt obliged to stop and talk to one or two of them. The first explained the amazing concept behind his game, which was entitled **Walking the Dog**: 'You see the winner is the player who gets home *last* with his dog. So if he misses two turns at the level crossing that's really good for him!'

'Brilliant,' I replied. 'Why don't you add plastic lamp posts so that players can miss even more turn while their dogs cock their legs?'



'No,' replied the worried-looking inventor, 'I couldn't do that. It's a family game.'

I wished him luck and walked on past handwritten signs on other stands which claimed such boasts as: 'THIS GAME OUTSOLD MONOPOLY IN A STORE BEFORE CHRISTMAS!' The game was called **Law Courts** but there appeared to be reporting restrictions imposed on the name of the store in question.

Then I stopped to listen to a description of what I thought was Sid Sackson's old game **Venture**, but no, it was the authoritative Mr J Jaffé describing his new game **In The Money**. It was obviously time to go back downstairs. Those old British stalwarts Gibsons Games had **Tweedledum** on show and as it was invented by Alex Randolph I felt obliged to find out how it was played. Alas it was for children, but at least they should enjoy it while we adults must continue to suffer. I was now desperate – I had to find a game that was good. But where? Could I be unashamedly biased in choosing **Space Crusade**, the next MB/Games Workshop collaboration? No, I couldn't get away with it. On I walked and at the Piatnik stand a box lit up my eyes to save the day. **Pole Position** is to be released in the UK, and is without a doubt my choice, not that there was much competition. I'd have to wait another week for the German Toy Fair for that.

George Crawshaw

Baffled is a memory game for two to four players. I have to say at the outset that I am not a fan of the genre, but equally I must recognise that it has its followers, and this game struck me as being well worth mentioning for its standard of presentation and the game system's neatness.

The activity of the game consists of discovering and memorising the location of 12 symbols. There are four sets of three symbols each (a fruit, a shape and a number), each set being a different colour. For example, the red set is a strawberry, a diamond and the number one, while the green contains an apple, a star and the number four.

Play takes place on a square track of nine squares per side, and each of the sides conforms to a similar pattern: three squares depicting one of the above mentioned symbols with the remaining six instructing players to perform various actions. Outside this track on each side are three large squares, lettered A to L.

At the start of the game 12 small cards each corresponding to one of the symbols are shuffled face down and then hidden at random under pyramids placed on the large lettered squares. Players are given an agreed number of 'Life' cards and the game is ready to begin. At this point all the pyramids are lifted, players are given one minute to memorise as well as they can the locations of the various symbols, and the pyramids are then replaced.

Play then proceeds in the normal way by each player throwing a die and moving clockwise. Landing on a symbol square obliges the player to indicate the pyramid beneath which he thinks the relevant symbol card is hiding. That pyramid is lifted for all to see, and if correct the player gains a life card, otherwise he loses one.

Things are not quite as straightforward as they seem, however, because some of the instruction squares tell players to swap

pyramids over. Others tell them to find three fruits, shapes, numbers or colours. Some squares offer the power to ask another player to find something, and there are even some where successful discovery of two items confers the power of moving another player's piece to any square.

As I said at the start I am not a memory game fan, but the neat symmetry of this production appealed to me, as did the good presentation and the well written rules. As one can vary the initial number of life cards held the game can be as long or short as one wishes, and handicapping for games involving different age groups is possible. There are certainly many worse games than this one in our high street shops, and I wish the promoters the success which their efforts deserve.

Baffled is published by RSH Games of Lewisham.

FAREWELL MY LOVELIES

Brian Walker

Perhaps my colleague Ian Livingstone summed the Fair up best, as we fought our way past the outstretched hands of barkers and bimbos (well the former, anyway): 'It's like Marrakesh,' he opined. Save for the aroma of exotic 'cigarettes', he was right, though I would guess that more business is done in a minute in even the most smoke filled bazaar, than in an entire week on Death Row. It's really hard to sympathise with the inhabitants of this most inhospitable of places. Innocent only in their ignorance of the fate of their predecessors, the subtext of their game was, for the most part, how to make a quick buck. Too often, games which were no more than roll a die – pick up a card – break a leg, were described as 'completely original', simply because nobody had ever done a game on window cleaning before.

Word games were also very popular this year, though I doubt whether such a fascination will save their publishers from the long goodbye. From the big boys, the message is: 'more of the same'. In other words, if the patient fails to respond, give it more of the same treatment. In MB's case this is understandable as the patient became positively feverish about **Hero-Quest**. The follow-up is **Space Crusade**, another fine looking game using top

quality Citadel components. Waddingtons have jumped on the fantasy bandwagon with **Key to the Kingdom**, while traditionalists will find themselves appeased by the same company's **Hollywood**. Serif Games were showing **Abalone**, an abstract simulation of sumo wrestling from France. *Et pourquoi pas?* Good to see it finally reaching these shores after its success in both Europe and America. Serif will now be distributing the game in the UK.

In the hobby sector, TSR had one of the best looking games at the Fair in **Battle of Britain**, which featured detailed miniature planes on stands, coupled with a top quality mapboard. Alongside it was **World War II**, another of TSR's SPI releases, with 'revised rules', you'll be glad to hear. Fisher Price, who distribute the Ravensburger games in the UK, have taken on Wolfgang Kramer's **Midnight Party**.

Gibsons have licensed another German game, Alex Randolph's **Tweedledum**, while languishing in a corner of Death Row, the 'UK's Leading Authority on Boardgames' presented the optimistically titled **In The Money**. Elsewhere the stands were dominated by charts showing 'ad spends', and grey double breasted suits which looked as though they'd been bought in a job lot: 'BIG DISCOUNTS ON PR SUITS'; one can almost see the sign. A representative from Ravensburger's German HQ was astonished about the lack of product knowledge. 'It all seems to be about marketing,' she proclaimed. Well I never! GI

NÜRNBERG TOY AND HOBBY FAIR

FEBRUARY 14-22, 1990

Brian Walker

No circus acts. No 'place an order and win a Metro competitions'. Not even the imploring gestures of rent-a-tarts. The only sound at the Nürnberg Toy and Hobby Fair was the quiet hum of deals being done, money being made.

But what of the products that were the subject of such financial machinations? The verdict is: better than last year, but could be better. Still too many lacklustre items with companies afraid to take chances and rock the boat called profit. The best example of this is the extraordinary proliferation of camel games. Amazing when you consider that Germany is not a country that readily springs to mind when you mention deserts. And yet, following on the trail of *Targui* and *The Last Camel* comes *Sahara* (Hexagames), and *Karavana* (Ravensburger). The latter is their 'big' game and well up to their usual high production standard. Another of their games *Asterix*, based on the eponymous French comic, also gets the treatment. Offering more promise is *Cash*, a card game by Jurgen Grunau and the normally reliable Wolfgang Kramer.

GOLD CARD

If camels are the *Theme des Jahres*, then gold comes a close second. Last year's *Gold Grabber* (Ravensburger) turned out to be a hill of beans, but that has not

prevented Hans Im Glück and Hexagames riding in with *Gold Rush* and *Digging*, respectively. Both are card games, and if not exactly 21 carat, they are certainly 'worth a look', to use a well known phrase. Also new from Hexagames is *Römer*, another card game but this time the subject is chariot racing. Our old friend Alan R Moon gets his name on the box for *Gespenster*, formerly known as *Black Spy*, and Piatnik's *Wehr Hat Mehr?*

— otherwise known as *Most*. Dutch company Jumbo always seem to come up with something interesting and this year it's *Wind und Wetter* a strategic game with an unusual theme: predicting the weather (Michael Fish eat your heart out). At least it makes a change from camels. The big disappointment at the Fair was Schmidt Spiele who seem to have forgotten what a good game looks like. How else can one explain their licensing of *Auction*? When this game was launched in the UK two years ago, its sole saving grace was the gavel that came with it. An altogether more welcome remake is the old Eon classic *Borderlands*, which will be published by Welt der Spiele, complete with all the expansion kits and English rules, and which will be launched at the Essen Games Fair in October.

ART ATTACK

The games of Kosmos seem more likes works of art than games, which is just as well because some of their releases suffered from playability problems. No such difficulty should be encountered with Wolfgang Kramer's *Terra Turrium*. A truly magnificent looking *objet d'art* for four players with a mind to solving strategic problems. In the same class was Rudi Hoffman's *Heucheln und Meucheln* — a game of backstabbing and breathtaking beauty. We understand that



Adel Verpflichtet: game of the year?

this company are about to sign a UK distribution deal. Art lovers and gamers please keep your fingers crossed.

But lets save the best to last: the best being F X Schmid, who produced both the range of the show, the game of the year in *Adel Verpflichtet*, or 'Rogues Gallery', as my colleague Ian Livingstone accurately dubbed it. Designed by Klaus Teuber, this is one of the most original games of the past few years. Fun, interactive, hardly any luck, outstanding artwork and components, this is a game which towered over the opposition. A brave decision by Schmid to publish — this is not the easiest game for Joe Public to pick up. As if this isn't enough, the same company came up with *Holiday AG*, a fine looking remake of the Wolfgang Kramer classic *Coup*, which has been out of print for many years. Fans of *Acquire* should love this.

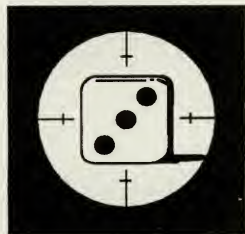
As ever, we will be importing, and reviewing, what we consider the best of these games when they become available. All of which means you're in for an interesting year, but not one which will burn a hole in your wallet. G



Gespenster: the ghost of Black Spy



Römer: on yer chariot



SNIPER

Grey matter

It seems that no European trade fair is now complete without a visit from Michael Gray, of MB (US) games, and his vast expense account. Mr Gray, the designer of such quickies as **Fortress America** and **Shogun**, gained some notoriety for describing **Die Macher** as 'too long'. Another of his designs was **Easy Money**, though he seems less than anxious to claim credit for this. 'You said in your review that this game was designed by Michael Grey. That must be some other guy,' he claims. Perhaps he meant some other Gray?

A burning issue

Another welcome visitor to London is Monsieur Luc Laurens, a French writer currently preparing a thesis on the games business. During the course of our conversation, Mr Laurens congratulates the magazine on its stance in the Salman Rushdie affair (a reference to our editorial in issue #6) and wonders why the politicians and media in general have not been firmer in their refusal to tolerate criminal intimidation, as they have been in France where publishers of magazines even more obscure than this one signed a joint statement deploring the death call of the *fatwa*. Regrettably I have to concur. It seems that our national editors are too busy suing each other in court to be concerned with trivial matters like the freedom of the word.

Chocolate news

Bonjour also to Yves Hirschfield, and Gil Monet – designers of the wonderful **Schoko & Co**. They tell me that they have considerably revised the rules, especially concerning the critical nature of the first turn. In addition, they promise to let us have full publishing rights. *Merçi*.

Who said that?

The Earls Court Fair provides me with the opportunity to reacquaint myself with Roger Hayworth, product manager for Gibsons games, and one of the few individuals in the UK industry who actually

plays games. Roger is quite taken with our piece 'Things they didn't say' in issue #12. So much so that he would like to add his own contribution of something *he* most certainly never said, to wit: 'Gibsons are definitely looking for two-player abstract games and chess variants'. Ian Livingstone would also like to make a non contribution: 'I'll read the rules,' is something he definitely didn't say, and probably never will. If anyone else would like to say something they never said, just drop us a line and we'll say it for you.

Moon with the most

Calling all fans of Alan R Moon! Both of you will be pleased to hear that four new games from Alan will be in the shops shortly. **Most**, a new card game, is being published by Piatnik, while **Gespenster**, another card game, this time with a ghostly theme, is being released under the Hexagames banner. The latter was a game Alan produced in his days at Avalon Hill where it came out under the title of **Black Spy**. October will see the release of two new board games from Alan: **By A Nose** is a horse racing game with an original betting system, while **9 Airlines** is a strategy game where players have to acquire the best routes. Who said nepotism is dead?

Claim to fame

An 'Announcement from Dr Osei Tutu Agyemen-Duah, DCS, AMD, DCu, DO, DHom, ND, DAcc, DPsy, DPhys, DArom, DAPM, MRH, etc.' The good doctor, it transpires, is a '... distinguished Ghanaian commercial scientist, alternative practitioner, researcher in commedecology and rectumology' (?). And no doubt many other things besides. The reason for his appearance in this column is that Doctor Agyemen-Duah has developed an 'original natural game' entitled **Fame**, which because of its 'good nature has been patented by the British Government'. **Fame**, the press release concludes, is suitable for 'polytechnics, bingo centres, hospitals, and prisons'. Further details from OTAD, 81 Walkford Way, North Peckham, London SE15 6EY.

Neighbourly advice

So you want to get your game published? Here's how: the first thing you must do is to construct a synopsis for a soap opera. Allow no more than five minutes for this task. The next step is to try to persuade two no-talent airheads to star in it. If they look bland and have antipodean accents, then so much the better. You've now got 'the package'. What you need next is 'the deal'. With ITV stations about to be hived off to the highest bidder, and TV from outer space prepared to show any old rubbish, this should be no problem. Once this has been achieved you simply sit back and wait for the ratings to soar. Pretty soon audiences will appear to be nailed to their couches while your show is on, secure in the knowledge that nothing exciting will ever happen.

At this point you are ready to enter the games business. Hop along with your shyster agent to Paul Lamond Games, though no doubt by this time they will have hopped along to you, and advise them, in that time honoured phrase, that you have 'a great idea for a game'. Of course you don't really need a great idea, or indeed any kind of idea for a game. Leave that part to the experts. Within weeks, days even, a game bearing the title of your brainchild will be in the shops. The beauty of all this is that you need know nothing about games – a vital asset in the UK market. See you at Earls Court.

One of them

News reaches me of plans for an English version of **Die Macher**. The tasteless name of this offspring is rumoured to be **Die Maggie**. Just who could be behind such a squalid project? Crawl out from under a rock Mr Charles Vasey – so called city gent and pillar of the establishment. Needless to say, this magazine will refuse to give any publicity to a game calling itself **Die Maggie**, and that any references by our contributors to **Die Maggie**, or attempts to promote **Die Maggie** in any shape or form, will meet with the severest punishment. How dare these subversives try to insult the strongest leader since Adolf Hitler in this manner?

Harp on

In the self publicity stakes, few can rival the 'UK's Leading Authority on Board-games'. A close rival though, is Maureen Hiron of Hiron Games. Sure enough, there she was at Nürnberg strolling around in a sweatshirt, emblazoned on which was the legend 'I Invented Continuo'. Unfortunately I forgot to pack my 'So What?' T-shirt. Bless her heart though, she was amicable as ever and even discussed games other than her own in a moment of forgetfulness.

Green channel

Despite the Lockerbie bombing, it seems that airport security is as lax as ever. How else is one able to explain the fact that a suspicious character like Mark Green, the manager of (Un)Just Games, can breeze through security and customs without so much as an eyebrow being raised? No

such luck for the equally furtive Ian Livingstone. If he'd been wearing a sign saying 'I'm a hit man for the *Hezbollah*,' he could not have attracted more attention from the rent-a-cops. Insult was added to injury when the former Sweatshop supremo bet me a pint that customs would give me a bigger going over than the one Douglas handed out to Tyson. That'll be a pint of best bitter please, Ian.

2 stroke jokes

One of the more touching sights at Nürnberg was the first appearance in the massive car park of the Traberts – the tiny 2-stroke East German cars – parked among sleek BMWs and Mercedes. Unfortunately their presence gave rise to the sort of jokes no magazine with any sense of decency would print. Such as: What do they call a Trabert convertible? Answer: A skip. Or: 'I'd like two windscreen wipers for my Trabert, please'. 'Certainly

sir, that sounds like a fair exchange'. Disgraceful.

Civil liberty

In the Fleet Street of old, the *Daily Mail* was known as the 'Liars Gazette'. As if to show that some things never change, Oswald Mosley's favourite daily recently ran a piece entitled 'Danger, people at play!' by one Sinclair McKay. According to Mr McKay, Britain was about to be engulfed by 'new range of bizarre board games which could severely damage family relations over Christmas.' One of these 'bizarre games' was **Civilization**, the aim of which, according to the *Fail* was 'to control the destiny of the world'. Gosh! How horrid. Probably taking a sidelong glance at the recent jackpot payments to libel claimants, the *Fail* took the unusual step of publishing a letter of correction from the game's UK publisher, Gibsons. G

INFLATION HITS GI SHOCK!

Owing to increased pay demands, we are having to put our subscription price up to £18 as from April 2nd. However, existing subscribers may care to render their investment inflation-proof by renewing before that date at the old price, be it UK, continental or other. (Your subscription does not have to expire for you to renew – we can simply add 12 issues on to your subscription.)

24 hour VISA and Access/Mastercard subscription hot line: ☎ 01-579 2612

Or complete the following form:

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....Post Code.....

Credit card #.....

UK £15

Continental Europe £18

US & rest of world £22 (surface mail)

US & rest of world £35 (air mail)

Back issues also available: £2.50 (UK), £3 (Europe) £3.50 (rest of world)

Cheques, postal orders, International Money Orders in £ sterling, payable to:

GAMES INTERNATIONAL
Lamerton House, 23a High St,
Ealing, London W5 5DF.

Also available: the following games. All prices include P&P

A La Carte £19

Die Macher £28

Favoriten £19

Maestro £17

Traber Derby £22

Hookipa £18

Victory in Baltimore

Despite persistent rumours, Victory Games are still very much in business. The talk started when Victory finally closed their offices in New York City, but what the gossips failed to mention was that Victory have moved to Baltimore. From this scenic location with prime views, they will operate autonomously out of the HQ of parent company Monarch Avalon.

At the playtesting stage are: **Third Fleet**, the latest in the Joe Balkoski designed series; Jon Southard's **Carrier**, a solitaire game of carrier battles in the South West Pacific circa 1942; and finally, Mark Herman's **Condition Red** a new combat simulation game, would you believe? All this is taking place under the eye of R&D manager Leonard Quam. It's always nice to be able to quash a rumour. Or in this case, quam it.

Your trains tonight

Rostherne Games, makers of the ever-green **Railway Rivals**, have several new games on-line for a May release. For those (like M Thatcher) who don't like trains there's **Bus Boss**. For those who do Rostherne announce that they are to publish two new maps for 'RR'. If you don't like trains or buses, then what are you doing living in this country? You may though, be interested in **Winchester** which is described as a 'race game using chess moves'.

Introduction to PBM

Due out in early March is a booklet called *The Flagship Guide to PBM Gaming*, providing a painless introduction to the weird and wonderful world of games by post. Topics covered include an explana-

NEWS

tion of PBM for the novice, how to choose your first play-by-mail game, and a variety of features on Britain's most successful games. This forty page booklet will be available free of charge, so stay-posted for further details.

Go for a burton

Spirit Games (*sic*) in conjunction with the Heritage Brewery Museum, announce the first Beer & Pretzels Board Games Weekend. This historic event will take place in the museum itself, located in Burton-on-Trent over the weekend 19-20 May. Special features include tables and chairs, hot snacks, a games library, and loads of bevvy. All sorts of games are promised from board games such as **Pass Out**, to 'participation wargames' (!). B&B accommodation can be arranged and for evening meals 'you'll be amazed at the variety and quality of restaurants in Burton'. Yes, we would.

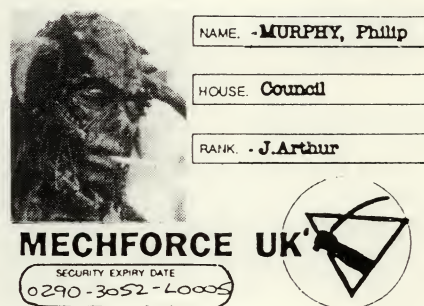
Despite the fact that nobody has ever heard of it, Burton is quoted as being 'bang in the middle of the country'. For further details telephone 0283 34801 (evenings), or write to: Spirit Games, 98/99 Horninglow St, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs DE14 1PJ.

House party

Ever wanted to be a subcommander in the Capellan Confederation? Why, of course you have. And now's your big chance. Mechforce UK enables you to enter 'the

world of the Great Houses of the Inner Sphere and beyond'. Blimey! Mechforce is, of course, the new UK fan club for The FASA Corporation's **Battletech** series. The club was formed by two long time devotees of the game, Bob Nicholls and Neil Page. For the £14.99 one year membership fee, you will receive a cloth badge, two **Battletech** posters,

a quarterly newsletter, and a Battle Ranking, plus much more, all neatly packaged in a professional looking folder. One of the first to sign up was GI writer and juvenile delinquent, Philip Murphy. If you would like to do the same them write to: Mechforce UK, 18 Canopus Close, Old Church Estate, St Mellors, Cardiff CF3 9NR.



Apocalypse 1

Due out from Palladium this summer are the first products in their **Rifts** line. This post-apocalyptic world gone wild includes rules for the coexistence of super-technology, magic, and the supernatural, and is compatible with other Palladium games such as **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness**. Adventures in vast wastelands, towering citadels, and incredible otherworldly vistas are promised.

Apocalypse 2

At last the secret West End games project has a name. Built up with ads of roiling black cloud formations and portentous copy, **Torg, The Possibility Wars** now emerges as a complete marketing concept. Reality storms have swept modern-day Earth, and the High Lords have stepped through splits in the sky. A select few humans become storm knights, set to repel the invaders and preserve the racial purity and reality of their glorious planet. The boxed game and first clutch of supplements, including a novel, are due out in May.

World Dipcon

World Dipcon will be held at the University of North Carolina from Friday July 22 to Sunday July 24. This convention hosts the 1990 World Diplomacy Championship, and a large UK contingent will be attending. Anyone interesting in going should contact Peter Sullivan, 27 Farrer Street, Darlington, County Durham DL3 6RG. **GI**



Leviathan: FASA needs you!

chart

★
THE PRINCIPAL UK
DISTRIBUTORS FOR



Now over 300 Games and Extension Modules to choose from!

**Available
NOW!**

SHADOWRUN

SOURCEBOOK

**The NEW...
ESSENTIAL**



SHADOWRUN™ 7104

STREET SAMURAI CATALOG



TOM DOWD

- PHONE FOR DETAILS OF GAMES IN DAMAGED BOXES OFFERED AT REDUCED PRICES
- PLEASE SEND S.A.E. FOR COMPLETE LIST OF GAMES
- IN CASE OF DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING ANY GAME - WE CAN SUPPLY DIRECT
- UK POST & PACKING CHARGES -
£1.95 FOR ONE GAME · £3.00 FOR 2 GAMES



chart

CHART HOUSE · STATION ROAD · EAST PRESTON
LITTLEHAMPTON · WEST SUSSEX · BN16 3AG · UK
TELEPHONE: RUSTINGTON (0903) 773170
(ALLOW UP TO 28 DAYS FOR DELIVERY)

REVIEWS

W A R | G A M E S

GAME OF THE MONTH

5TH FLEET

DESIGNED BY
JOE BALKOSKI

PUBLISHED BY
VICTORY GAMES

PRICE £28.55

RATING: 9

Despite the unfounded rumours of Victory Games' demise, I recently took delivery of *5th Fleet*, the fourth game in Joe Balkoski's excellent 'Fleet' series covering modern naval combat at the operational level. I must admit to being a little surprised that Victory have gone along with the series this far (how many systems warrant four full games rather than gamettes?), but I presume this decision is backed by good sales and I'm certainly not complaining. As far as I'm concerned, Victory can keep going till all the US Fleets are covered and then some. What about a Falklands module for instance?

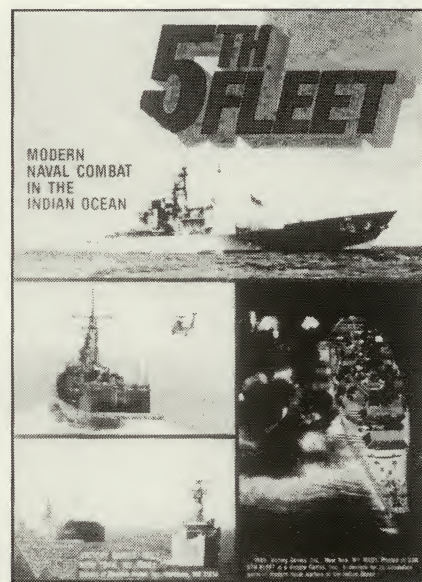
The Victory design team have gone for photos rather than artwork for the cover this time but once again the package is striking. The weighty bookcase box is

literally bulging with new maps, charts, exotic ship classes and rule refinements to improve an already established and highly regarded system. This latest game easily matches the others in terms of finding something new and interesting every time. Production standards are to the usual Victory level which says enough really.

LOGISTICS

Whereas the earlier games have tackled the Med, North Atlantic and Pacific theatres, *5th Fleet* is centred on the clear, warm waters of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. The three section map covers the area from Djibouti on the Gulf of Aden, via the Persian Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz to the west coast of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldiv Islands. The overwhelming impression though is of blue ocean hexes and it is obvious that we are not dealing with the cosy confines of the Med here. The designer's notes indicate the problems of logistics in this remote area (remote for the US Navy anyway) and several of the scenarios concern moving supplies to and from key areas.

The system is essentially the same as the earlier *7th Fleet* which in turn was a substantial revision of the original *6th/2nd Fleet* games. The enhancements are slight revisions to existing rules but the section on combat (all types) does have some notable changes. For those who know the system, there are amendments to combat, certain charts, bases, tactical co-ordination and mines. My thoughts on Joe Balkoski's exemplary rule books are well known and this set continues the trend. Complicated systems are explained clearly and plenty of examples are provided within the twenty page basic rules. The intermediate and advanced rules are also concise and easily digested for a game of this scope and there is plenty of chrome for those who want it.



The counter mix amply covers the large Soviet fleet, the US '5th Fleet' (there is currently no official designation) centred on the carriers Enterprise and Abraham Lincoln and the various navies making up the fringe and Persian Gulf powers such as Iran, the Saudis, India, Pakistan and the small gulf states. Some European and the Australian navies are also represented by their standing forces. There is a good selection of carrier and land based planes and there are loads of pesky subs, cargo ships, assault ships, tankers, tenders and so on. As before, the counter mix is wide and offers more than enough interest for repeated playing.





MK 75 (Oto Melara)
76mm Gun onboard
O.H. Perry FFG

HARDWARE

Although the Fleet games don't approach the detail of *Harpoon* (GDW) with its individually rated radar systems, the game loses very little in assuming the wider approach. Hardware freaks still get sea-skimming SSMs, cruise missiles, tactical nukes and all manner of planes and choppers to play with. I feel this level of coverage is spot on for gamers like me who enjoy commanding US carrier wings and Super Étendard *flotilles*, but don't feel a need to differentiate between types of torpedo. The counters display all this information clearly although if any more rules come along in the next game, they may become a little cluttered. My only petty gripe remains the abbreviations of the ship names on counters. I accept this is necessary to a point but it is irritating when there is blank space after a name that has been shortened to, say, Jaret from Jarrett. Weird.

The scenarios are as interesting and varied as one has come to expect from the Fleet games. Twelve different situations are provided which vary in size from a four tum tanker dash to the full blown war scenarios that would take some hours to complete. Each scenario is preceded by some effective 'future history' writing that outlines the reasons for the scenario and why the victory conditions are important. I find this approach ideal for getting the feel of the situation. This is followed by the usual lists of forces involved, special rules and victory conditions. Of the scenarios we played, I most enjoyed Battle of the Maldives which de-

picts an unlikely but fascinating attack by the Indian navy on an American AV8 airbase on those beautiful, but sinking, islands. The advanced scenarios cover larger actions at theatre level and have correspondingly higher numbers of counters. Those scenarios that I played seemed to be well balanced but that is a characteristic of the system.

The combat system is clean and consistent and one can usually work from the quick reference sheets during play. Most types of combat work on a simple but effective system where attacker

and defender both throw ten sided dice which are added to their respective combat values and adjusted by modifiers. This approach does tend to factorise everything (apart from air-to-air combat) into just one combat results table. This is therefore used heavily and generates a wide spread of possible results. Because the success or failure of an attack is usually heavily dependent on the two rolls, the outcome can vary between a carrier being sunk by a lucky shot or nothing happening at all (which I assume caters for dud weapons and so on). All this increases the interest of any combat roll and makes for tense moments as SSM attacks are launched or a sub lets rip with torpedoes.

It is hard to say whether the chart is 'accurate' enough to apply to all types of combat, and there have been criticisms from other reviewers for these reasons, but we find that given enough rolls and enough units, the random element averages out and the resulting feel is spot on. Where it can be more noticeable is in

smaller scenarios where if one player has a string of good rolls, the contest can be over rather quickly.

WORKABLE

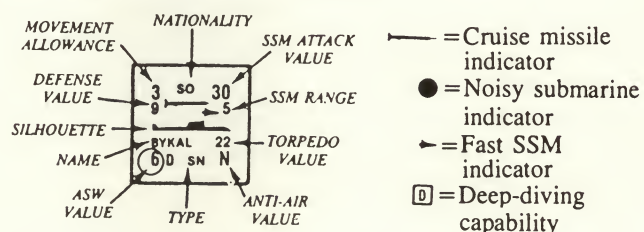
Overall, the system is smooth, fast, unobtrusive and exciting. After playing it a couple of times, the system seems to fade into the background and one is simply left with the decision making required by the tight scenarios. The strongest point is that the game plays quickly with most of the scenarios easily playable within two or three hours, including set-up.

As it stands, the Fleet series is by far the best attempt to cover this complex and fascinating subject in a workable format. However, to achieve that and make a playable game, the designer has skirted some issues, probably on purpose. The major omission is the lack of limited intelligence (all counters are always visible even if not actually detected). This is something that doesn't completely gel with me, especially for submarines, although the detection system does seem to work well as a compromise. As a player rather than a designer, I have little idea what impact a hidden movement systems would add to, or detract from, the game. Nevertheless, I hold Joe Balkoski in high enough regard to assume that he has considered and rejected it for a reason, particularly since he used hidden movement in his earlier *Taskforce* (SPI).

The Fleet series remains the ideal solution for gamers interested in the subject but who are not committed enough to tackle *Harpoon* with all its undoubted complexity. By adopting a broad brush technique at the cost of some hardware detail, I feel Joe Balkoski has again struck a workable balance between playability and realism, probably the most difficult of all design tasks, while still providing enough detail and atmosphere to satisfy all but the rivet-counters.

Mike Siggins

SAMPLE SUBMARINE UNIT (Front)



Note: A submarine always has an "N" for its Anti-Air value. Only Soviet submarine units have the "Noisy Sub Indicator" and "Deep-diving Capability." US SB's whose ASW values are parenthesized cannot use these values in combat.

SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

DESIGNED BY
FRED SCHACHTER & STEVE
WEISS

PUBLISHED BY
AVALON HILL

PRICE £28.55

RATING: 4/8

Siege of Jerusalem is an enormous game originally privately published in the 1970s but now repackaged by The Avalon Hill Game Company. I never played the original game, having avoided it at the Origins convention at which it was unveiled. It came out in the heyday of the monster game when we must all have had a lot of spare time and nothing else to waste it on. In addition, it was designed by two enthusiasts (one of whom assisted in Richard Berg's **Julius Caesar**) who must have read Flavius Josephus frequently.

This version of **Siege of Jerusalem** is certainly not for those of you who expect to have to use the table upon which you play the game for any other purpose for quite some time. This is not some daft little magazine game where three sixes carry you into the Temple and Bob's your uncle. It is a serious attempt to simulate an extremely 'mean fowt fight' for the serious player (**Ancient Advanced Squad Leader**, really). It has lots of rules, lots of counters and lots of map. Accordingly, it absorbs lots of time. Is it lots of fun you ask? I found it to be less than riveting for my level of interest. If you are not interested deeply in the subject before you buy the game you are not likely to be converted in its course. Of course if you like siege games you will already have bought the game and be sneering at this review!

SIEGECRAFT

The map is 49" by 33" and prospective purchasers should check they can produce a table of sufficient size, because a lot of you are going to find you cannot. The introductory game based on Cestius Gallus' attack in 66AD uses only half of the map (I say 'only' but this is relative). This scenario provides a perfectly adequate game for my tastes and will train you in the bloody world of siegecraft (this is one of those games where you can ruin your chances with depressing ease). However, if you want to sample the full

richness of the game you will want to play the full thing because this is what the designers want to give, and what you paid for. The map shows the entire city of Jerusalem in 70AD with walls, towers, and key sites (for example, the Temple) marked. Although there is lots of detail I found it quite easy to grasp but would recommend you read *The Jewish War* before playing, and consider the short historical notes in the rules.

The counters are quite small and, as I have said, numerous. They each have a detailed line drawing (but much of this detail is lost at this scale) of the kind of soldier represented. I found the Roman red too strong for easy reading under artificial light and confess to finding the Jewish Faction symbols difficult to differentiate (thank goodness for colour coding). The Romans have three units of heavy infantry to a Cohort (but the First Cohort is not double-sized: is this accurate?), and they also have cavalry, slingers, archers and auxiliary infantry. However, it is on the backs of 'Marius's Mules' that the assaults must depend and you may need to take up Testudo formation to keep losses down. There are also units of ballistas, onagers, and catapults for shooting up the defenders and various towers and rams. Sundry legates and generals also appear to exert a measure of command control. The Judaeans have zealots, regulars and militia (with zealots and regulars having missile capability). The Judaeans also have artillery and cauldrons, Burning Oil, for the dropping of. They, too, have a number of leaders who are all named. As you have a lot of different units some discreet colour coding is included which is most useful without being obtrusive (although gamers with some element of blue/green colour blindness are going to curse a bit). As the ultimate test I found I could sort out the counters more quickly than I had expected.

INSANITY

The mission of the Judaeans is to survive the Roman siege faced by a number of legions and impedimenta. To prevent complete insanity setting in, the game is split



into assault periods (which look like a day of very intense fighting) with preparation periods in between in which mining, the building of equipment and various other housekeeping tasks are completed. There are thus key strategic and tactical decisions to be made and the more time spent on preparation the better, but, the less time left for later.

The sequence of play is quite simple with a Rally Phase, a Mutual Fire Phase, a Movement Phase and a Melee Phase. The complexity comes in the large number of operations to be completed and diced for in each Phase. Each section is tidy enough, although the rule book is printed in a tiny type-face and is almost devoid of any helpful suggestions of play of any length. Something in the Victory Games style would have helped we novices and would have established the designers' credentials. Indeed I would like to issue a general plea for the occasional page to help us get into the game, the subject and the system.

Siege of Jerusalem cannot be criticised for trying to simplify things. You have a wide number of missile types; you must learn how to breach walls with rams and mining; how to prepare escalades (the boys nip up the ladders); when to form Testudo to avoid the withering Judaeans fire; how to employ towers without losing the pushing units; how to build a ramp, and when to sally forth from the gates to burn the engines of the otherwise employed Romans. Despite the in-

cremental nature of such engineering operations it is still possible for either side to stage a bold coup (especially in your first few games). The siege details are not such that the Roman is bound to win (indeed I cannot disguise that the designers' feelings are not with the Legions).

Of course the above is just the tactical side of *Siege of Jerusalem*. You also have the operational side as the Judeans employ a number of 'factions' and the Romans a number of Legions in an attempt to defend or capture the city in sections. The city has a number of 'quarters' and if you make a big mistake your siege or defence can be completely thrown out of kilter. Given the lack of good examples you should never attempt the full game until the 66AD scenario has been played

to distraction and you know how to conduct yourself.

Given the fractured nature of Jerusalem, which has a number of internal walls, it is unlikely that the Romans will storm two sets of walls in one Assault Phase (it is not impossible though). So the Roman must plan carefully to ensure he is not unduly bold or unduly cautious because his time is limited. Once again you macho types would find any advice otiose but I would have liked a few more hints because finding you have muffed the game after thirty hours of play is fairly demoralising. Of course *The Avalon Hill General* will eventually publish this sort of article and you should make sure you acquire it and learn its lessons.

Who is *Siege of Jerusalem* for? Well, you must be able to resource a long and big game, so you need a spare room with a big table. In addition you must be very interested in the tactical side of sieges in the Ancient Period, because it is the technical side of the siege that gives the game its feel. Finally, you have to enjoy games with a very large number of operations where you serve almost as centurion rather than legate. All this makes it difficult to score such a niche product. Some of you are already noting eight out of ten, others will allot four. Five, six or seven don't adequately reflect the game's qualities so . . . er, it is either eight or four, you make the choice (decisive, I'll give you decisive).

Charles Vasey

BLITZKREIG '41

COMMAND MAGAZINE GAME

DESIGNED BY
TY BOMBA

PUBLISHED BY
COMMAND

RATING: 6

Blitzkrieg '41 is designed by Tyrone Bomba and is the first issue game in *Command* magazine, the editor of which is Tyrone Bomba. The designer, like many gamers, has a great interest in the German army in the last war (and once designed a future history on an Axis victory). *Blitzkrieg '41* is in the same style as Tyrone's very popular *The Tigers Are Burning* which appeared in *Strategy & Tactics* (which, coincidentally enough, Tyrone also used to edit – a pattern beginning to develop here?). Both games are honest to goodness combat games with lots of movement, lots of combat, and plenty of risk taking. I have my doubts about the loss levels suffered by attackers but the basic system (when adequately explained) has much to recommend it compared to its rivals. The games are not unduly difficult in play (although playing them well is, as ever, another matter) but are still recognisable as simulations (although the degree of validity started an interesting discussion in my magazine some time ago).

Blitzkrieg '41 covers the first months of the war in Russia to March 1942. This means that you German players do not simply get to beat up the poor Russian

with impunity, you must then face a winter counter-offensive where he gets his own back (the designer warns against unsporting behaviour like resigning in November).

OPTIMUM SIZE

The scale is quite large so that the map is not unduly big but you still get enough room for manoeuvre. *Blitzkrieg '41* is pretty much an optimum size here and though there are plenty of counters you rarely face enormous stacks (and may find, as the real generals did, that you have gaps in your lines). In addition to the scale advantages the rules do not recognise zones of control so that if you want to block a hex you have to occupy it. This makes for more 'real' playing room on the same size map compared to a standard game (I think it is also more accurate). It also leaves you with the worrying risk of breakthroughs if you concentrate your forces. You cannot prevent these but you can try to make the enemy do them where you want. The historical importance of the river systems stands out well on the map. Detail is good and clear and you form a quick view of the various terrain features, I found it to be very playable. The map stretches from the 1939 border east to Gorki and from Leningrad to Mai-

The counters are corps or armies and one is not troubled

by heaps of tinier formations so beloved of the 'accurate' school of designers. Step reductions counters for the relevant units are handily stored off map and the general game organisation is good. The exception is tracking hex control which is subject to a little homily from the Editor. As a general rule whenever a designer tells you, the gamer, off for being lazy it is because he could not think of an easy answer and is blustering. The rules manage to get in things like airpower, cossack raids and the weather in a very easy but effective manner. *Blitzkrieg '41* does not ever have to break into a sweat.

EXPLOITATION

The game seeks to demonstrate the importance of armour by allowing it to move and attack and then to attack again in the combat phase. One sends the armour in to rip holes in the lines and then exploits through. Several attacks can be made in a movement turn by each stack of armour and as exploitation is based on



success in combat you can find a wide range of results leaving both players with 'interesting' problems. The infantry (the German player hopes) will be able to follow up and hold the captured areas. The trouble is that in using the maximum move armour stacks may wish to split up and this will make them less effective next turn. There is no easy answer. Too much boldness can leave the Panzer spearheads to be badly mauled, but too much caution will allow the Russians to deploy back into multiple lines of defence where they can take losses for as long as you want. The German must be bold, but not foolish ('foolish' is 'bold' which loses!)

Against such a cavalier attack which can break through most lines one must adopt a defence in depth. As a result there can often be some exciting actions deep in the 'rear areas' as a spearhead bumps into reserves. The Russians start without a great number of troops but more spring up in the early game and can be used to build the defence, but always at the risk of a sudden collapse. Although there is a lot of Russia to abandon it never seems

quite enough (as Russian). Once more the need for the German to keep the Russian off balance becomes more obvious.

Combat is a simple matter of odds and some special modifiers with losses in terms of steps lost or hexes retreated (in some cases the choice is not completely free). The German must seek to exploit weak defences so that he takes few losses, causes big retreats and renders the stronger positions untenable by taking the supply towns in the rear. The bagging of a large Russian force is a target to be sought after as it may leave the frontline so weak that a drive on Moscow is possible. Of course as every German knows this 'pocket' policy is blamed by armchair generals for the failure to take Moscow. Trouble is it is not so easy in practice to avoid doing it.

VIABLE HISTORY

As ever with such games players can experiment with differing strategies. If the German can bash the Russian enough early in the game the design posits the fall of the Russian government. So if by late

July the cities of Riga, Minsk and Kiev have fallen the game ends; by October the total needed is more than tripled. Every design must rest on its designer's view of history but I cannot accept this as viable history. The Russians are not the French of 1940 and Stalin was quite able to disguise any defeat of that level. That sort of collapse had not happened since the Polish Wars for Moscow and Smolensk in the 1600s. Still it is up to the gamer how much credence he gives this rule. You can, after all, always alter it.

Blitzkrieg '41 is a hard-fought game which takes time and concentration but is quickly learned. It should be within the capacities of most novices, and all experienced players should find it accessible. It represents excellent value and an auspicious first game for *Command*.

Charles Vasey

Command magazine, PO Box 4017, San Luis Obispo, CA93403, USA.

**CALLERS
WELCOME**

OPEN MON-FRI
9am TO 6pm
SAT
9am TO 1pm

Custom Games

MAIL ORDER GAMES SPECIALISTS

**3 MILES
FROM
JUNCTION
31 - M1**

LATEST RELEASES AVAILABLE NOW!

AD&D

Monster Compendium 3 & 4 £6.50
Complete Thief Handbook £9.95
Complete Fighter Handbook £9.95
Battleystem min. rules rev. £9.95
Spelljammer boxed £12.95
Wildspace £5.95
Bloodstone Ande £5.95
Test of the Samurai £6.50
Puppets £4.50
Vale of the Mage £5.95

D&D

Tall Tales of the Wee Folk £6.50
Top Ballista £6.50
The Sea People £6.50

SPACE 1889

Caravans of Mars £5.99
Steppelords of Mars £5.99
Liftwood Conspiracy £7.15
Canal Priests of Mars £5.99
Cloud Captains of Mars £5.99
Temple of the Beastmen (boardgame) £21.99

ICE ROLEMASTER

Creatures & Treasures £8.99
Rolemaster Screen £5.99

Shadow World

Kingdoms of the Desert Jewel £8.99
Jairan Land of Twilight £10.99

MERP

Perils on the Sea of Rhûn £4.99
Treasures of Middle-earth £10.99
Combat screen £5.99

SPACEMASTER

Legacy of the Ancients £4.99
Cyberspace RPG £12.99

CHAMPIONS

Hardback £19.99
Classic Enemies £8.99
GURPS
GURPS hardback rules £17.99
Boatwars Deluxe boxed set £13.99
Ultra Tech £10.50
Super Temp £5.99
The Prisoner £7.99

LION RAMPANT

White Eagle £4.99
NATO Vehicle Guide £4.99

ARE MAGICA 2nd edition

Are Magica 2nd edition £17.99
Storm Rider adv & start kit £6.99
PALLADIUM
Adv In Northern Wilderness £6.99

R TALSORIAN

Cyberpunk £13.99
Near Orbit £5.99
Teenagers from Outer Space £5.99
Fieldtrip £4.99
Mekton 11 £7.50
Rockerboy £5.99

WEST END

Ghostbusters International £14.99
Apokermis Now £6.99
Ghostbusters 2 the Movie £9.99
Tobins Spirit Guide £9.99
Pumpkin Patch Panic £7.99

STAR WARS

Battle for the Golden Sun £8.99
Crisis on Cloud City £8.99
Other Space 2 £8.99

CHAOSIUM

Cthulhu Classics £12.99

FASA

Shadowrun Mercurial £5.70
Dreamchipper £5.70
DNA/DOA £5.70
Street Samurai £8.70
PARANOIA
The Iceman Returneth £5.99
Alice Thro' the Mirror Shades £5.99

BOARD GAMES

GAMERS

Bloody 110th £28.99

GDW

Fire in the East £49.99
A House Divided £17.99
Blue Max (WW1 air) £18.99
Command Decision (Min.) £15.99

MAYFAIR

Dragon Riders of Pern (Revised) £17.99

HEYLINS LTD

Pompeii £29.99
The Golf Game £39.99

FLYING TURTLE GAMES

Shark £16.95
Chicago £22.95
Kalahan £22.95

OMS

Rise and Fall (Roman) £21.99

VICTORY GAMES

5th Fleet £28.55
Shell Shock £28.55

AVALON HILL

Siege of Jerusalem £28.55
Napoleon's Battles £20.45

TURNING POINT STALINGRAD

TPS Expansion Kit £4.95
Statis Pro Football £28.55

MAIN BATTLE TANK

Hollow Legions (ASL) module £20.45

LEADING EDGE

Aliens (Boardgame) £17.50

CALLERS WELCOME - LARGE FREE CARPARK.

PLEASE PHONE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR YOUR ACCESS & VISA ORDERS.

UK POST & PACKING ON ORDERS OVER £12 FREE, ON OTHER ORDERS ADD £1.

VISA

ACCESS

CUSTOM GAMES

Mail Order Specialists
Unit 1 Rotherham Close
Norwood Industrial Estate
Killamarsh, Sheffield S31 8JU
☎ 0742 476965

REVIEWS

R O L E | G A M E S

TIME OF THE
DRAGON

AD&D SUPPLEMENT

DESIGNED BY
DAVID 'ZEB' COOKPUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £11.95

RATING: 6

'Explore the lost continents of Krynn!' runs the blurb on the front of *Time of the Dragon*, a new boxed set detailing an area of the *DragonLance* planet that only TSR marketing personnel had previously dreamed of. Basically, *Time of the Dragon* is a heavy (and refreshingly full) boxed set for use with AD&D and AD&D2 which contains staggeringly comprehensive background information on Taladas – a whole new continent on the planet Krynn. The package is certainly impressive, comprising two books, four A1 full colour maps of primary areas of Taladas, and 24 A4 cardboard plates, each beautifully illustrated and as user friendly as the best referee screen. The question is, does the background to this previously obscure part of Krynn warrant such slavish devotion to detail?

The answer, quite simply, is that it does. Taladas's history is not only interesting and believable, it is also exciting and different enough for you to be thinking of adventure ideas as you read through the 116 page Guide Book to Taladas, or look at the 24 map cards. The history itself follows the idea behind Ansalon, the continent where the War of the Lance (that is, all the previous *DragonLance* material) took place, in that a shower of meteors sent as punishment by the 'true gods' forged the land the players adventure in, although in the case of Taladas it was just one meteor that struck rather than several thousand. This meteor was of sufficient size and mass to virtually destroy the continent, plunging it into darkness and

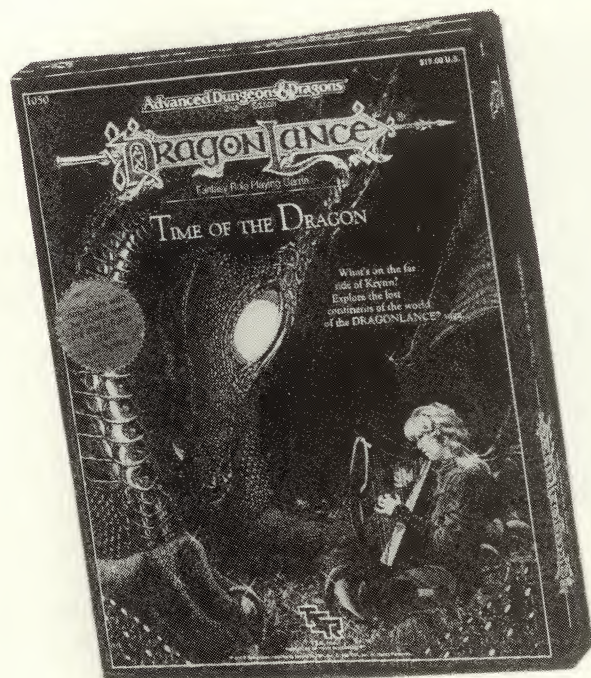
ravaging thousands of square miles of civilisation. The cultures and societies that rose from the ruined land are unique to any role-playing system thus far released, with its extremely original mix of old D&D races (minotaurs, gnomes, kender, elves and humans are the major races, in order of relative dominance and importance) and its blend of science and magic (which owes less to *Spelljammer* than *Space 1889*).

The 52 page Rule Book to Taladas, with its striking cover of a fearsome fire minion (one of the denizens of Taladas's lava seas), is a useful, if rather padded, referee's aid, detailing everything from new character races to the Roman-derived organisation of the minotaur's soldiery. The book includes nine new (but mostly derivative) monsters in a format completely unacceptable to those with the *Monstrous Compendium*, as well as pages of spell lists and rules for those seven or eight people still using TSR's *Battlesystem* tabletop rules.

Since the maps are in the common format (simplistic and without hexes), the most desirable components of *Time of the Dragon* are the aforementioned map cards. Each card, illustrated in full colour on one side and with background notes, rules or information on the reverse, depicts either a town, a sewer system, sketches and working mechanisms of an aircraft, ship or cannon, dress and appearance of a major race or fine detail of one of the civilised gnome citadels. Each is an invaluable play aid, well thought out and lovingly rendered by the particular artist.

There is sure to be plenty of support for this new realm, with adventures exploring the full potential of the source material contained within this pack. If you have been looking for a new direction in which to take your players – whether they are on Krynn or not – look at this before resorting to *Spelljammer*'s unlikely alternative.

Dave Hughes



STARFIRE

DESIGNED BY
KARL CLEWS & MATTHEW
FINLAYSON

PUBLISHED BY
STARFIRE

PRICE £7.50

RATING: 4

Maybe the backlash against beautifully packaged games, with little content and high price, has begun. Maybe it is just that desktop publishing has brought the ability to produce a game of their own within the reach of the average group of gamers. I am all in favour of homebrewed systems, like this one. No game sparkles like a referee with his own creation. Unfortunately it is usually the quality of the referee which is more important to the game than the rules themselves. The difficult part of rules writing is making this come across in print, so until someone figures out a way to put 'Referee Creativity' in the box, we are stuck with professional game designers.

Starfire has a 140 page no-frills production, with 'near letter quality' print and few illustrations, together with a separate

two page character sheet. In this game the player characters are all members of *Starfire*, a freedom fighting organisation dedicated to freeing mankind from the domination of the evil Nytharkans. The insectoid (what else?) Nytharkans first announced their presence in human space by destroying the peaceful planet Ixiol, which is commemorated in the name *Starfire*.

In the background section, the star Vega collapses into a black hole, and then turns into a planet complete with intelligent life! 'Solar system' and 'galaxy' are used interchangeably, as are 'planet' and 'star'. From this it is obvious the game is soap opera rather than hard science fiction.

The game system is a standard derivative of *D&D*, with characteristics of Wisdom, Charisma and even Alignment! Critical hits and *Call of Cthulhu*-style insanity are tacked on. Isaac Asimov really should have been credited for The Three Directives of Robotics.

'Neuro-empathy' has some interesting rules. If a neuro-combatant creates a zone of heat, it later turns into a zone of cold for an equal time, as the universe snaps back like an elastic band. A good idea, but better suited to magic rather than psionics. There is an extensive section on bionic additions to the human body, and skill chart explains well the time taken to perform and the results of all the skills.

Overall, *Starfire* fails to make any great strides in science fiction rolegame design, but it is much cheaper than the competition. Further supplements are promised. This is probably due to the influence of the big companies, who seem to feel it is not a rolegame without an endless stream of supplements.

Steve G Jones

DRAGON KEEP

AD&D MODULE

DESIGNED BY
RICK SWAN

PUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £5.95

RATING: 9

Dragon Keep, third in a series of new *DragonLance* modules (the others being *In Search of Dragons* and *Dragon Magic*), is one of those rarities: a module that is part of a series yet can be played as a stand alone adventure. Copious information concerning the previous modules is supplied, including a complete two page introduction for new players. However, anyone reading through *Dragon Keep* would almost certainly want to run the previous two modules first, since the series is an excellent vehicle for players (and characters) weary after the War of the Lance, which ended three game years ago.

The players' new problem is to investigate why the dragons have begun to disappear from Krynn. *Dragon Keep* begins with a childminding duty on one of the planes of the Abyss, then takes the players to the bottom of a sea of blood, flies them to the Moon in a skyboat and introduces them to the Astral Dragon. In addition to being a different and original module, *Dragon Keep* is exceptional value for money. Its 64 pages are packed with text, maps, background and notes, and a full colour A1-size map of the Moon rounds off this excellent package.

Dave Hughes

WATERDEEP

AD&D MODULE

DESIGNED BY
DOUG NILES

PUBLISHED BY
TSR

PRICE £4.50

RATING: 4

Waterdeep is the third module based on the Avatar series of novels, covering the Time of Troubles, wherein Ao, Lord of All, has cast the Gods down to walk the Forgotten Realms as mortals. The player characters' task is to 'Save the Realms!' by ensuring that the two Tablets of Fate – created by Ao to keep the Divine Balance

– are returned to him. And you thought quests went out with flared nostrils.

Unfortunately, as with many attempts at novel-to-scenario conversions, *Waterdeep* sticks rather too closely to its source, using dialogue, descriptive passages and, unforgivably, all the characters from the novel as non player characters. As a result of the latter, the players are either saved at every turn by a helpful non player character appearing in the nick of time, or simply left to die inconsequentially where luck saved the characters in the novel. Players may well feel that they are being herded from scene to scene (they would be right) with few opportunities for ideas of their own. In addition, they may feel robbed at the adventure's extra-planar climax when the credit for saving the Realms is taken by the non player characters, who ultimately reap the rewards.

Dave Hughes

ARS MAGICA

SECOND EDITION AND SUPPLEMENTS

DESIGNED BY
JONATHAN TWEET & MARK
REIN•HAGEN

PUBLISHED BY
LION RAMPANT

In issue 3 of this magazine I raved about the first edition of this game, saying that 'If there is one rolegame that deserves to sell bucketloads in 1989, this is it.' Well, I'm not sure whether it sold bucketloads or not, but it certainly sold enough to warrant a second edition, and a second edition with a colour cover at that. Inside, the typography has been spruced up a little, and the rather tasteful and atmospheric medieval woodcuts of the first edition has been replaced with some naff fantasy art.

Ars Magica's main virtue was its creation of an atmospheric medieval background, and the second edition stresses this by introducing the world at the beginning. The rest of the book has been rather subtly revised. The core mechanic is the same, but has been streamlined so that there are now two types of roll: a stress roll and a simple roll. As someone who criticised the four different ways of reading the dice in the first edition, I applaud this change. Both the character creation and combat sections benefit from improved organisation: rather than having to hunt around for details of such things as damage effects, convenient tables are provided in the right places.

The centrepiece of the game – the magic system – is unchanged and again benefits from improved organisation. A new section has been included on Arcane Experimentation for those Magi who like to

chance their arms a little. Rather than a sample scenario, the second edition contains a sample setting: the Mistridge Covenant. This setting is used in the supplementary material reviewed here, and provides a fine place for adventure. I feel this is a more productive inclusion in the main book than a scenario.

I can only reiterate what I said about the first edition: it's worth buying for the ideas and the imaginative vision of its authors, even if you don't plan to play it. If you like to try new games, then you should certainly pick up a copy: you might find you get hooked.

Ars Magica second edition costs £17. Rating: 9.

THE STORMRIDER

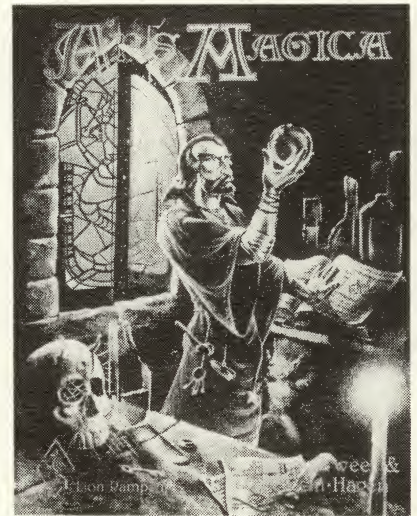
This 'Jump Start Kit' by the authors of the original game is a scenario designed to introduce you to *Ars Magica* and the Mistridge setting. Copious player sheets are provided, and the scenario works best if you use the pregenerated characters supplied. The story revolves around a legendary being of indeterminate nature – The Stormrider – whom the player characters have to deal with. Even though this is an introductory scenario, plenty of leeway is given for the players to come up with their own ideas and choices. What's more, the scenario is fairly sophisticated in that it uses rifts within the player character group in a creative manner, and examines some lofty tragic themes at the same time. All in all, worth a glance if you fancy a scenario that is story-orientated without being a straitjacket.

Paul Mason

The Stormrider was designed by Mark Rein•Hagen with Jonathan Tweet, and retails for £6.95. Rating: 8.

SAGA PACK

Ars Shorta might have been a better title, since this is actually a fairly thin supplement for the *Ars Magica* rolegame, comprising stats and character descriptions for sixteen grogs, eight briefing sheets, and a storyguide's screen. However, this is a case of never mind the width, check out the quality, because most of it is pretty good. The briefing sheets are the best things here. Each is two pages long and covers a topic in a succinct and intelligent way. The Decisions sheet, for instance, explains how to structure events and scenarios so as to make them more story-oriented – a theme which is taken up in more specific detail in the Creating Stories sheet. The sheet on Mythic Eu-



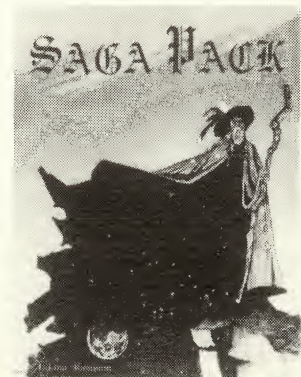
rope has perceptive musings on the nature of magic. Additionally there are source essays on Magi, the Order of Hermes and sundry other topics.

These are good articles because they are immensely inspirational. I found myself continually breaking off to jot ideas down as I read them. The grog descriptions are less outstanding – not so different from those character profiles you find in *DragonLance* packs, though presented with greater justification because if you play *Ars Magica* straight, switching roles from game to game, then keeping track of the grogs could otherwise be a nightmare. But since they won't readily transplant to any other system they're strictly for aficionados.

So there you have it. Whether you're prepared to shell out for this one or not really depends on if you play *Ars Magica* (or some similar medieval-type game). I certainly found it more stimulating than the trainspotter's fare of goblin culinary habits and whatnot that usually passes for a source pack – but an *Averoigne* or *Escalais* supplement would have been much more welcome.

Dave Morris

Saga Pack is written by Mark Rein•Hagen and Lisa Stevens. Price as yet unknown. Rating: 7.



CHILD'S PLAY

Marcus L Rowland

Jenkins Minor gripped his bat and stepped out from the pavillion. It was bad enough that St. Grimsdykes second eleven were fielding their demon bowler; even worse, the umpire was only a third-grade enchanter, and hadn't even spotted the illusory balls in the last over.

The demon raised its head and grinned at him, its scarlet face and horns contrasting oddly with its flannels. Jenkins cast a protective cantrip, and prepared to battle the forces of darkness for the Inter-Schools Commemorative Cup . . .

Imagine a world in which it is death to step on the wrong section of pavement, where sinister monsters lurk under the bed, and where inanimate objects can suddenly come to life. This isn't some exotic fantasy location; it's the mental world of most children.

Most fantasy role playing games take their ideas from Tolkien, Howard, Leiber, and other 'heroic fantasy' sources, but there is a huge body of fantasy literature that has little in common with these sources, and can provide dozens of ideas for interesting adventures. Childrens fantasy is one of these alternatives, and has several unusual advantages:

1. Authors can't assume that their readers are aware of the common ideas behind fantasy, so they often create fresh backgrounds for each story. Often these backgrounds use situations and 'rules' which can surprise experienced players.
2. Children don't insist on the rigid boundaries of adult fiction, and it's common for stories to incorporate elements of SF and horror, not just conventional fantasy. Again, these may surprise players.
3. Childrens books are cheap; usually a half to two thirds the price of their adult equivalents.
4. Many adults turn their backs on 'juvenile' material, and it's possible to lift large sections of plot (for your own use, of course, not for publication) without players noticing.
5. A lot of recent so-called juvenile fiction is well worth reading, regardless of its usefulness in game terms.

Adventures often begin very close to home, with characters living in a modern-day setting, and falling into adventures by accident. The adventure isn't necessarily set in a conventional fantasy world; characters may move between a fantasy situation and the prosaic problems of family life and school in a few seconds. Sometimes this idea is reversed; one character in *The Wizards of Caprona* enjoys fantasy novels in which magic doesn't exist, and takes routine magic for granted.

Magic usually works by odd rules, totally unlike any rolegame system. Many characters have innate magical talents which aren't necessarily improved by experience. Once they know that magic exists, they are able to take control of their powers extremely rapidly. Sometimes powers get weaker with maturity, or may be weakened if characters learn that what they are doing is supposed to be impossible. In many books magical artifacts are rare, or only serve to trigger the powers of characters; for example, *So You Want To Be A Wizard* and its sequel features a magic instruction book, a cross between a computer and a spell book, which can only be read by people who have potential magical powers. It doesn't give them these powers, it helps them to unleash those they already have. Another common theme is the idea that magic always has a price tag. The price can include injury, pain, or unfortunate side effects. Magic often causes more prob-

lems than it solves, and attracts the attention of powers which would ignore someone who lacked magical abilities. Magic may also involve responsibility; characters often find that they have been given their powers for a reason, usually so that they can perform an extremely dangerous mission. Despite these restrictions, it usually seems to be possible to use magic at will, without any obvious limits on the number of spells cast.

Magical techniques vary greatly, but one common idea is the use of song or verse as an essential element in any spell. Want to walk on water? The spell must be pronounced in fluid tones that reflect the nature of liquids. Want to fly? The spell is an amalgam of human and bird song.

What can magic do? Although there is wide variation, the following powers are common in juvenile fantasies:

Communication with animals. Sometimes the character is able to understand animals, without being able to speak to them, but usually there is two-way communication.

Summoning animals. This power often goes wrong; for example, a spell intended to summon one dog might attract every dog in town.

Animation of inanimate objects. Usually toys and other objects that are in the shape of humans, animals, or other forms that are capable of movement. An army of toy soldiers might come to life and fight a battle, or a toy dog might start to bark. Animated objects don't necessarily obey orders, and may even turn on the person that released them.

Flight and levitation. This power generally seems to be an adaptation of the animation spell; a carpet or broomstick is 'persuaded' that it can fly, then the spell caster rides the object.



STREET SAMURAI C · A · T · A · L · O · G

When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping.

You're the ultimate fighting machine. A predator-for-hire in the savage, urban world of Shadowrun. The tools of your trade are airfoil grenades, form-fitting body armor, enhanced reflexes, and maybe a rangefinder for your cyber-eyes. Whatever you need to get the job done, you can find it here. It won't be cheap, and remember to watch your back...but you already do, otherwise you'd be yesterday's news.

DNA/DOA

From Dave Arneson,
co-creator of
Dungeons & Dragons®

It began as a simple datasteal, but somewhere it went wrong, and now you've lost the goods, lost your contacts, and your only chance for survival is to get out of Seattle—fast. There's just one problem: the only way out leads through the heart of the deadly Ork underworld, a dark labyrinth beneath the city where your first wrong move may be your last.



Shape changing. Many characters are able to change their own shape, or that of other humans. Transformations into animal form seem to be most common.

Time Travel. Characters can sometime use old artifacts, such as a picture or a stone axe, to travel into the past. More rarely, characters are somehow able to 'tune in' to the future.

Dimensional Travel. Characters can open 'doors' into alternate dimensions. Sometimes there are only subtle differences between the dimensions, in other stories the changes are immense.

Astral Projection. This power is often encountered, usually when a protagonist is ill or injured. It may incorporate elements of time and/or dimensional travel.

Let's put all this together, and try to come up with a new type of non player character magic-user for fantasy campaigns.

Mage Prodigies (for want of a better description) are child magicians; they can use magic without going through all the tedious stages of mastery required in most systems. These characters don't necessarily know the source of their powers, and usually don't have them under full control. Generally they have one specialised power, plus a sort of magical affinity; they are somehow always around when magic is about to be used, and can rarely be harmed by it.

Spells deliberately aimed at a Mage Prodigy have a nasty habit of rebounding on the user, area-effect spells tend to leave them unscathed, and other forms of attack always end in unfortunate accidents to the attacker.

The deadliest Mage Prodigies are very young children, who aren't even aware of their powers; they stroll through life, wondering why people keep fireballing themselves, and laughing as demons accidentally impale their feet with their own pitchforks.

As Mage Prodigies become aware of their powers, they gain more control; at the same time their powers become weaker, although more focussed, and their vulnerability increases. This continues until maturity, at which point the Prodigy either loses all power, or starts off on the normal path of wizardry at a relatively low level.

Mage Prodigies are unpleasant travelling companions for adventurers who are unaware of their powers. They tend to scramble the effects of all spells, not just those directed against them, and can re-

ally mess up detection spells and other forms of long-range magic.

Even if a Prodigy is identified, there's no way of knowing how the child's power will develop. Adventurers might be delighted to find a child who can lead them unerringly to gold, but may not be too keen when they realise that the child is homing in on guarded dragon hoards. A child that absent-mindedly drifts between dimensions and carries adventurers with him could be extremely bad news. Since their powers are often triggered by the aura of other magical effects, most adult magicians will try to keep well away from them.

Really powerful Mage Prodigies (with powers strong enough to destroy the average army) should be extremely rare, no more than one or two to a world. Lesser Prodigies may be much more common, and are much harder to identify.

For a really odd campaign, how about a world where children are the only humanoid magicians; their powers work because they never question them, and ebb away as they grow and realise that most people can't do the sort of things they take for granted. You probably won't want to run magician player characters; a typical party might consist of four or five adventurers guarding a spoilt child who is their insurance policy, making frantic efforts to bribe the kid with lollipops and other goodies whenever danger threatens.

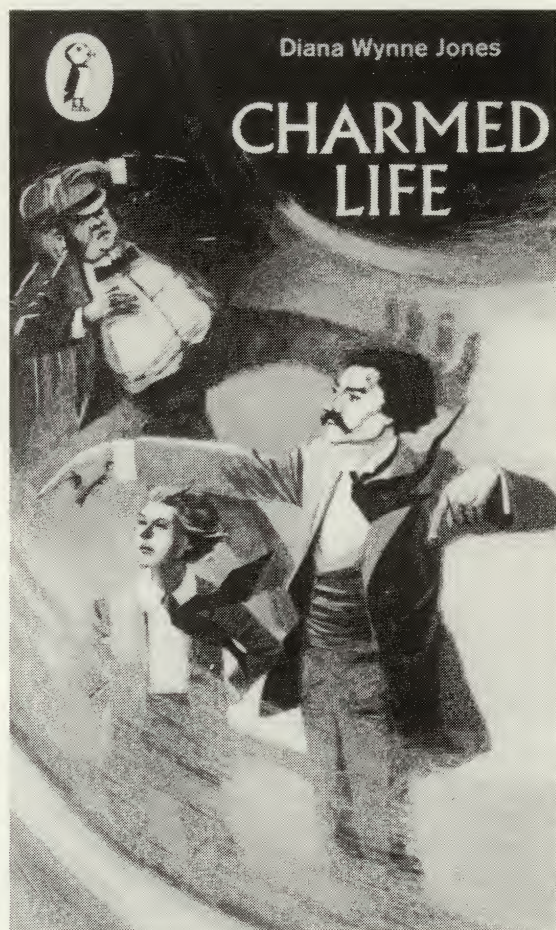
How about a world where all adventurers are children; they are the only ones with enough magical resistance to go anywhere near faerie and other supernatural creatures.

If these examples don't give you any ideas, try the sources below. I guarantee you'll find a few useful plot devices and non player characters, if nothing more.

Sources

All of the following books include ideas which could usefully be incorporated into a fantasy campaign. All are relatively recent, moderately easy to find (with one exception), and a lot of fun!

Gremlins Go Home! Dickson / Bova



*So You Want To Be A Wizard**, and *Deep Wizardry*, Diane Duane

The Talking Parcel, Gerald Durrell

Charmed Life, *The Lives of Christopher Chant*, *The Magicians of Caprona*, *Archer's Goon*, *Witch Week*, *The Homeward Bounders*, *Eight Days of Luke*, *The Ogre Downstairs*, and *Howl's Moving Castle*, all by Diana Wynne Jones

The Earthsea Trilogy, Ursula Le Guin

The Narnia Books, C S Lewis

Time Bandits (film) Terry Gilliam (Dir)

No apologies whatever for including so many Diana Wynne Jones titles; she's the most accessible author in this field for any British reader, and her work is thoroughly recommended. The 'nine worlds' used in many of her books are a particularly rich setting for any fantasy campaign.

* The exception: I should make it clear that I am including this book on hearsay. All reports say that it's very good, and the sequel is excellent, but I've never been able to get hold of a copy. If any reader happens to have a spare, or a copy of the rumoured third book of this series, I'd be delighted to hear from you c/o this magazine. **GI**

REVIEWS

COMPUTER GAMES

SWORD OF THE SAMURAIDESIGNED BY
LAWRENCE SCHICKPUBLISHED BY
MICROPROSE

PRICE £24.99

GAME PLAY: 5

GRAPHICS: 9

Available for the PC.

'Suspend notions of imminence', advised the program after I'd lost more limbs than the Black Knight in Monty Python's *Holy Grail*. Sadly, this homily could apply equally well to the game itself. I say sadly because the packaging, graphics, and the attention to detail really deserve something better at the core. The box blurb describes the game as a 'role-playing, action-adventure simulation'. Quite honestly, it is none of these things, at least in the sense that such terms are generally understood. What we have here is a curious hybrid of *some* of these elements with a heavy dose of arcade action thrown in.

CLAN DESTINY

You start off as a young samurai in 16th century Japan. You control a small estate and a few underlings, and owe your allegiance to your *hatamoto*, who himself reports to the all powerful head of the clan – the *daimyo*. Your objective is to emulate this figure with a view to becoming Shogun, whereupon Japan will be united and everyone will live happily ever after. Opposing you, and seeking to impress the *hatamoto* in this noble task are three other computer controlled samurai capable of responding to your actions. At the start, you may choose to have one of four skills – thus endeth the 'role-playing' chapter.

This being Japan, your initial task is to gain honour (or 'face'). Generally this involves travelling and doing battle with the ruffians that seem to dominate the Japanese countryside. More interestingly, messages appear summoning you to

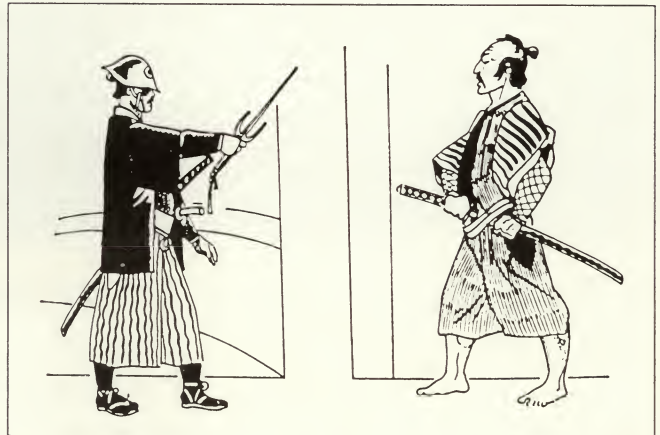
the castle of the *hatamoto* who will ask you to defend the honour of the clan by rescuing a damsel in distress, or repulsing attackers with your army. At the start of your journey, though, you are asked in what guise you would like to travel. If you choose to masquerade as a 'poor ronin', intriguing options present themselves,

most of which involve heaping great shame on your rivals. Not that they need your help: Nakano, the program informs us, is forever visiting the house of Ichican and getting caught in an 'act of some impropriety' – doubtless a euphemism for banging Ichi's wife. As he made something like ten visits in half an hour, his honour (and probably his stamina) dropped to zero. Amusing as this is the first time around, it represents a microcosm of the game's chief problem – that of repetition and the resultant lack of logic. For example, after attempting to assassinate a rival samurai, I checked his character profile and was stunned to find that he only 'mildly disliked' me. This, after virtually reducing him to hamburger meat!

Such fight sequences are quite fun and easy to handle even if you are not much of a joystick junkie. Unfortunately they soon pale as you continuously fight the same opponents in the same locations, however attractive these locations may be. Meanwhile back at the fief, a message informs you that Nakano has stopped visiting Ichican and has taken to roaming the countryside (looking for Ichi's wife, I'll bet).

KUNG BLUE

The graphics in the game throughout are really superb and offer a real flavour of Japan. For me, though, the most innovative parts of the game were the battle sequences. Here you are able to deploy specific formations for your army, rather



like calling plays in American Football, as designer Lawrence Schick states: 'I wanted a wide open, fluid system, not based on boardgame hexgrids'. And this is exactly what you get, though ultimately it becomes just another of the parts failing to add up to a whole. Another quite substantial part is the magnificent manual – a glossy 102 page beautifully illustrated treat, part of which is given over to historical notes and a glossary of Japanese terms. In his 'Designers Notes' Mr Schick acknowledges the influence of the great director Akira Kurosawa and his films such as *Yojimbo* and *Sanjuro*. It is a mystery, then, why such a large part of the game is given over to less than cerebral arcade sequences. It's hard to imagine the Western admirers of these films being enamoured with the game's almost cartoon like narrative, or for that matter, arcade addicts flocking to see *Kagemusha*. Perhaps part of the answer lies in the Koei game *Nobunaga's Ambition*, which towers over the genre like a well, Shogun. There is simply no competing with this, a fact which *Sword of the Samurai* tacitly acknowledges by not attempting to. Despite the posh look, this is really a game for those who prefer *Kung Fu* to Kurosawa, and scrambled eggs to *sushi*.

Brian Walker

Note: The recommended interface is via keyboard which is just as well as this copy at least refused to acknowledge the presence of a joystick, while a colleague experienced a similar reluctance to accept a Hercules card.

>You wake up with a hangover the size of Robert Maxwell's ego. Spurs have just been beaten 5-0 by Fisher Athletic, and the editor wants you to find a game on Hungarian whippet racing.

>What next?

>

SCAPEGHOST

DESIGNED BY
PETE AUSTIN

PUBLISHED BY
LEVEL 9

PRICE £19.95

GAME PLAY: 6

GRAPHICS: 5

Available on the Amiga, Amstrad CPC 6128 & PCW, Apple II and Mac/Mac+, Atari ST and XL/XE, BBC Master or 48k+, Commodore 64 or 128, IBM PC and Spectrum +3.

Just how much graveyard humour can an adventurer take? In this, the last of the text adventures from Level 9, the puns outnumber the puzzles as you take on the role of the 'ghost of A Chance', a police detective who died in the course of duty. Your erstwhile colleagues are of the opinion that it was your own incompetence that led to your demise, and endangered the life of your partner too, so your task in this game is to clear your reputation, rescue your partner and see to it that the crooks get banged up for a 20-stretch.

You have three nights in which to achieve these objectives. The game is divided into three sections, one for each night. Each section may be played independently, which not only means that the adventure

can therefore be made available in cassette format but also means you do not have to suffer the frustration of being unable to get at the goodies later on in the adventure through your inability to get past the first bit.

The first night is spent in the graveyard, meeting all the other residents and coming to terms with the limitations of being a ghost. With a bit of practice you eventually become strong enough to levitate smallish objects and later on in the adventure you develop the ability

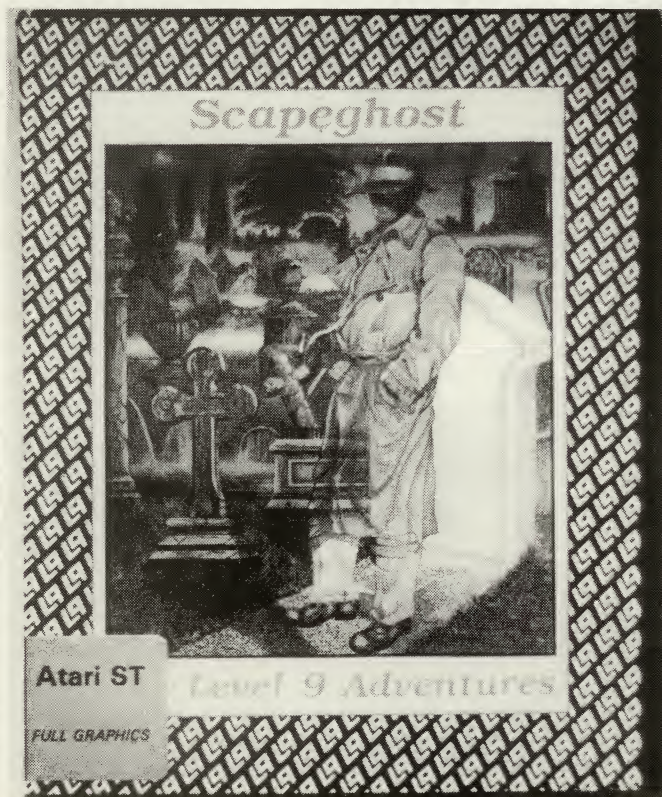
to pass through objects, so it's not all bad being a spook. Much help is given to you by Joe Danby, a ghost who is unable to haunt the pub he owned before he died 'because they don't serve spirits'. Each graveyard resident has a problem that can be solved by you and in return they will give you assistance in your quest to thwart the crooks.

On the second night you get to leave the graveyard. Irresistibly, you are drawn to the house formerly used by the gang as a hideout. It is just as well that you are irresistibly drawn to this house, for it would not progress the adventure very far if you decided on your second night as a ghost to go and see a movie (*Heaven Can Wait*, perhaps?) or something. Once in the house you have to search for clues pertaining to the whereabouts and future plans of the crooks. Provided you are prepared to go through the laborious adventure routine of examining every object mentioned in the text, the clues should be unearthed fairly easily. Similarly, problems can be solved either by a bit of thought or by the thicko method of trying every possible permutation ('Put light bulb in mouth' – well, it worked in the *Addams Family*), but there is a time limit plus the incentive of getting a high score, so it is as well to exercise the old grey matter as much as possible.

Part three takes place in the gang's new hideout – provided you manage to bunk a lift in the gang's van – and here your aim is to distract the lookout until the rozzers arrive, rescue your partner, who is being held hostage, and also prevent the crooks from destroying the evidence. The problems do not seem to be appreciably harder than in Parts One and Two, but then that is easy for me to say, as Level 9 kindly provided a hint sheet with the review copy.

It is difficult for me to rate *Scapeghost* in relation to other adventures, as I do not normally play this type of game. If I was the sort of person who got his kicks thinking up 32 synonyms for the verb 'to take' then I'd be working for *Roget's Thesaurus*, rather than *Games International*. However, the humour and atmosphere of *Scapeghost* kept me in good spirits (these lousy puns are infectious), and I enjoyed it more than I would the average jigsaw puzzle. Hardened adventurers would probably not find it too challenging, but for those of us not addicted to brainache this game is a reasonable substitute if you do not happen to have a Hammett or Chandler book in the house.

John Harrington



BANDIT KINGS OF ANCIENT CHINA

DESIGNED BY
KOU SHIBUSAWA

PUBLISHED BY
KOEI

PRICE £44.95

GAME PLAY: 7

GRAPHICS: 8

Available for the PC.

Bandit Kings is the fourth grand strategic game produced by the Koei Corporation, following on from **Nobunaga's Ambition**, **Romance of the Three Kingdoms** and **Genghis Khan**. Like its predecessors, **Bandit Kings** can be played by up to seven players, and comes with four different scenarios representing different starting points from the book. The manual is extensive and clearly presented, leading you through the early stages of your first game. Like the previous games, **Bandit Kings** is based around the basic unit of a province. You control one character, who must recruit other heroes and soldiers, and conquer as many provinces as you can. In the previous games, the goal was to take over the whole country, which made for a stagnant endgame as the dominant player had to coordinate the efforts of twenty or more provinces, each requiring an order each turn. In **Bandit Kings**, the endgame *ought* to be more interesting, since the goal is an individual confrontation with the evil Minister of War, Gao Qiu.

The game is played in a series of turns, each representing a month. Each province gets one action per turn, and these occur in a random order. Orders are given by typing in the number of the order from the menu given. You can't use a mouse or a joystick to enter orders, but you do quickly get to remember the appropriate numbers for the commoner commands.

Once you have built up your home province to a reasonable level of productivity and security, you can start expanding into empty provinces, and going to war. Battles take place on a full screen map, and each of the 49 provinces in the game has its own hex map. Combat uses a short menu of options which include fireballs and magic for those lucky few sorcerers. Since combats last a maximum of 30 days they don't hold you up too much.

When you capture a new province one of your generals is put in charge of it. Ordinarily he will go about giving orders himself, and you won't get much say in his affairs beyond dictating general strategy.

This is a good way of cutting down on your decision making, but it can be a problem if your general is too gung ho and has a habit of fling his forces against the next fief (I forgot to tell you, didn't I? All the characters in the game have different personalities, or at least character traits and speech patterns!). If you desperately need fine control, then you can swear brotherhood with one of your men whose loyalty isn't in question. A sworn brother enables you to give orders in fiefs other than your home one, and is also not prey to the drops in loyalty which occasionally cause your followers to desert. Since there is a limit to the number of sworn brothers you can have, the **Nobunaga** problem of one person having to enter orders for a ludicrous number of fiefs is avoided.

If you capture a lot of provinces, win a lot of battles, and generally do everything right, the Emperor Hui Zhong will bestow on you an edict entitling you to attack Gao Qiu personally. If you beat him, you win. You'd better do it pretty rapidly, though, because in 1127 the Chin nomads sweep down from the northern borders and overthrow the Northern Sung dynasty. Since the game starts somewhere between 1101 and 1105 (depending on the particular scenario) you'll appreciate you don't have *that* much time.

I've played this game quite a bit over the past month, and come nowhere near close to getting the Imperial Edict, let alone killing Gao Qiu. In a multi-player game there is the added problem of competi-

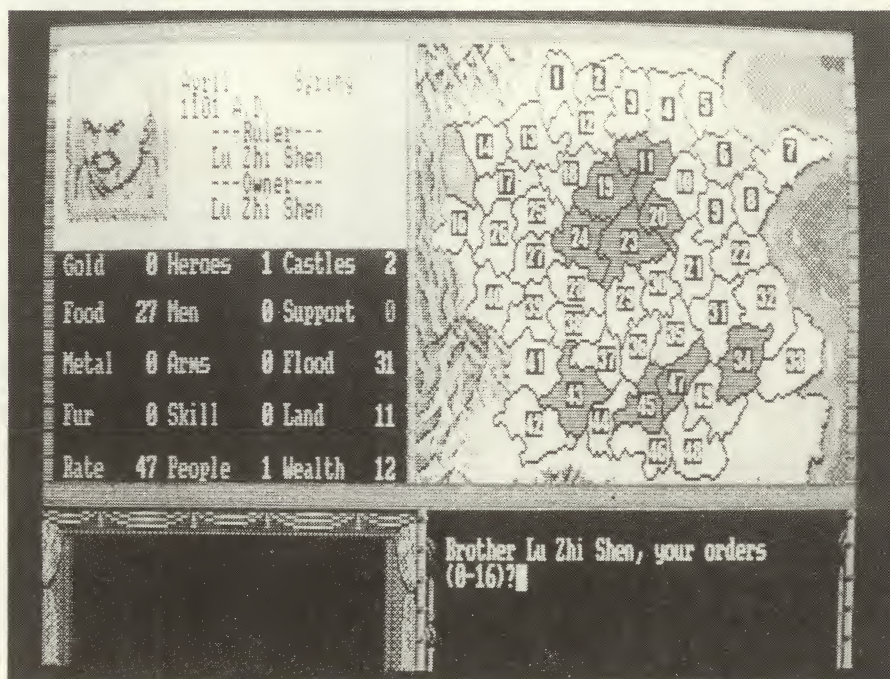
tion: ideally you should be attacking your opponents, but if you do squabble among yourselves then you've got no chance. Also, since it's so hard to get the Edict there's only the slenderest chance that two people or more could obtain it. Hence, it's going to be clear halfway into the game who's got a chance of winning and who hasn't. There isn't that much fun to be had by those who haven't.

On the plus side, the graphics are effective, with little animations appearing on a sort of stage thingie in the left hand corner of the screen. EGA colour is beautifully deployed, and in CGA mode the designers have opted (wisely, I feel) for black and white to preserve the resolution, rather than have a yucky chunky look. No Hercules option is given, which annoyed me. Another bonus is that the personalities of the 255 characters in the game are well handled.

All in all, **Bandit Kings of Ancient China** is an enjoyable, challenging (too challenging, I'd say) strategy game. It corrects the flaws in **Nobunaga's Ambition** and captures something of the spirit of *The Water Margin*. As a multi-player game it has problems, but if your players don't mind long waits and the possibility of elimination it could be a fun way to spend thirty-odd hours. As a solo game it works fine apart from the excessive difficulty.

Paul Mason

Bandit Kings of Ancient China is available on import from Strategic Plus Software.



PANZER BATTLES

DESIGNED BY

ROGER KEATING, DANNY STEVENS, AND ROGER TROUT

ROMMEL— BATTLES FOR NORTH AFRICA

DESIGNED BY

ROGER KEATING, IAN TROUT, MARK HOLMAN, PHIL NIVEN, AND DAVID FREER

BOTH PUBLISHED BY SSG

PRICE £24.99

GAME PLAY: 8

GRAPHICS: 7

Available for the PC.

A warm welcome back to these games, first seen in 8-bit and C64 formats. Both utilise the highly acclaimed Battlefront system developed by those cheerful anti-podeans known collectively as SSG. At first sight, the system appears to have more menus than Trust House Forte, but after a run through the tutorial provided, you'll be playing like a veteran within minutes. Handicapping is possible for both sides, ranging from 'slight' to 'major'. The computer can also operate in 'enhanced' mode if you think you're a bit of a clever dick.

CORPS D'OEUVRES

The package comes with a handy flow-chart depicting the menus. To put it simply, you hit 'return' to advance down the chart, and 'escape' to revert back to previous menus. Thus to give an order, you would punch 'order' on menu 2 which would take you through to a screen depicting the divisions under your command. To the left of their corps identity you get info regarding their fitness, losses taken, and so on. After selecting the outfit to which you want to give an order you will be taken through to menu 14 which shows their current action status. The computer determines what their status is, 'engaged' and 'contact' being the most vigorous states. If engaged, they have four actions from which to choose on the subsequent menu. Once a mode has been chosen, attack for example, you are led through to another menu where you get to choose exactly what type of attack you desire. As there is no set order in which you have to do things, you can always go back and change your plans.

From all the aforementioned options, there are branch menus leading to more options such as support, allocate assets, and so on. However, 'Cowardly' Colonel Mike Siggins will be dismayed to learn that there is no retreat facility. Another option noticeably absent is movement. This is because the computer moves your troops for you in a weird sort of 'auto-scroll phase' — a somewhat heretical concept to many wargamers, to whom nirvana is pushing stacks of cardboard counters across an hexagonal grid. Although not of this ilk, I was a little fazed by this. You do exert some influence via the advance and move HQ options, but not enough for my liking in a game where tactical movement is paramount. It's not that the machine makes naff moves, but more the lack of control, which in turn also affects the post-game gloat (when applicable).

JUST DESERTS

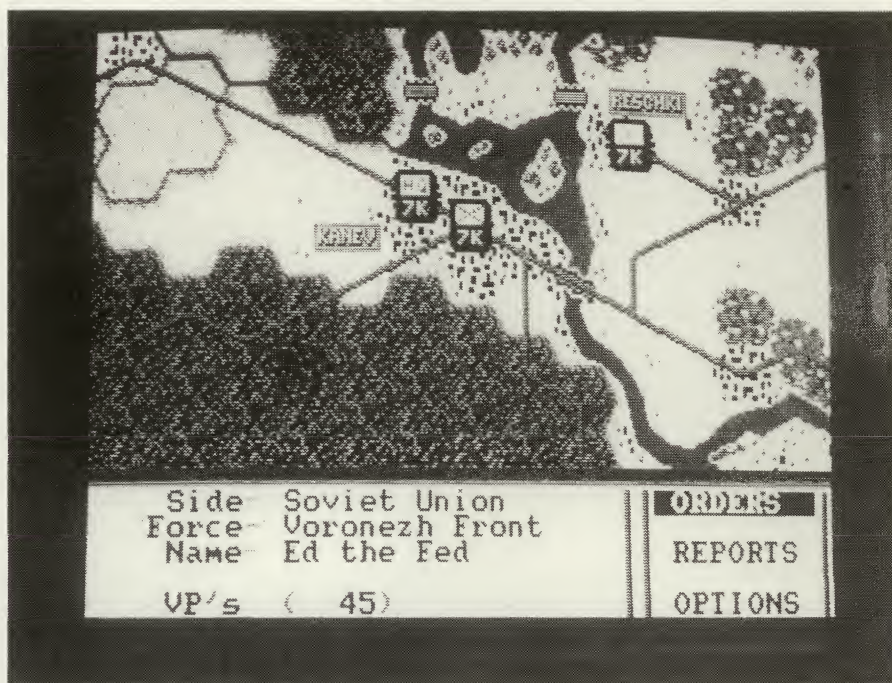
If you're new to the system there can be no better place to start than Tebourga Gap, the eighth and shortest scenario in the game. The action takes place March 26 to 28, 1943. Your job, as commander of the Allied 2nd New Zealand Division, is to take El Hamma and clear the pass for the armoured divisions to rumble through. As the Axis, your job, unsurprisingly, is to stop them. Time is of the essence (this is only an eleven turn scenario), so the Allied tactics are clear; attack then exploit (that is, advance) with your front line, making sure to rest them each

night. Use the rest of your forces to engage and distract the enemy. This way you should do as General Walker did and march triumphant into El Hamma on the turn 11, albeit with a 'major' allied handicap, it must be admitted. The victory system in all the games rests on the capture and control of certain objectives, though in the case of this scenario, it is 'El Hamma or bust', as the rule book puts it.

MALT EASY

The Malta Invasion is a 'what if' scenario and an altogether tougher proposition. The key here, for the Allied player, is to inflict as much damage as possible on the parachute drop, and then defend key objectives when the subsequent sea-borne invasion arrives. Valetta and Conspicua must not fall if victory is to be achieved. Other scenarios included in the package are: Syria, Sidi Reznegh, Cauldron, Alem el Halfa, Kasserine, and Maknassy. In terms of playability, the Kasserine scenario is not much fun if you're playing the Allies, mainly because you only appear to have two options: run and get mashed, or stand still and get mashed, which in reality was exactly what happened.

Included with the game is an excellent quality full colour map, complete with terrain key, depicting each scenario. The rule book is clear and provides a fine description of each scenario together with tactical hints. The map graphics are excellent and mercifully free of hexagons.



Why then, after freeing themselves from the shackles of board wargames, have the designers reverted back to the stone age and depicted the units as little more than 16-bit equivalents of cardboard counters? Surely after cramming so much technology into this generally well thought out system, it can't be so difficult to show a tank as a tank? This is not simply a question of aesthetics; it helps players identify more with the troops under his control, and as a result reduces the somewhat mechanical feeling of the game.

PANZAI

Panzer Battles is the later of the two releases and it shows. The opening menus are considerably brighter, and information is slightly easier to access. With Panzers, you're talking serious tanks, and sure enough here they are on a Russian rumble. The game comes with six scenarios: Minsk, Moscow, Kharkov, Prokhorokva, Kanev, and Korsun. The menu routine is pretty much the same as described above with the exception of the newly acquired importance of Senior HQ, who now plays a major role in determining the supply of Junior HQ. For the purposes of this review, the 35 turn Khar-

kov scenario was enacted. The Russkies had to put up a good show early on without taking too many losses, so as to be able to withstand a fierce Panzer counter-attack. In the event, the Germans took a lot of early pain resulting in the good comrades, led by General Walkerchev, easily achieving their objectives while never being seriously threatened in Khar-kov itself. Playing time was around four hours, though because of the save game option this presents little problem.

TANKS FOR NOTHING

The map graphics are good without ever threatening to go on display at the Tate, but again we get dire looking blocks when there should be REAL TANKS. Gone is the wonderful map that accompanied **Rommel**; in its place there is a small black and white job in the scenario booklet, which, it should be pointed out, provides an excellent description of the tasks in hand and historical notes. Each of the games comes with the WarPaint and WarPlan programs. Using these, the player can create his own scenario, or customise existing scenarios. In addition, at the end of each given scenario in the rule book, there are a number of sug-

gested variants together with instructions on how to implement them using these programs. With the WarPlan program, you can even transfer pieces of terrain, that you may have taken a fancy to, from one scenario to another.

Despite their hard core titles, there is no reason why either of these games should be restricted to the wargames market. In essence, they are resource management games that should appeal to both military freaks as well as the dreamers who constitute the rest of the gaming fraternity. One of the most admirable features was the care and attention to detail, which had gone into both games – clearly produced by people in love with the subject matter. Neither of these games will be the next **Populous**, nor were they meant to be. You don't design games like this for the money. Let's hope that SSG's excellent **Gold of the Americas** (reviewed page 50) earns enough loot in to bring them the financial success that they deserve.

Brian Walker

SWORD OF ARAGON

DESIGNED BY
**KURT MYERS AND RUSSELL
SHILLING**

PUBLISHED BY
STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS INC

GAME PLAY: 5

GRAPHICS: 4

Available for PC and C64.

This is a one player strategic and tactical game based around the unification of a kind of mock-medieval kingdom. You begin in charge of a single small city-state, having just taken over after your father's death at the hands of some orcs. You direct the city's economy in terms of taxation and development (whether to invest in agriculture, commerce or whatever) and also recruit troops for your army units.

At the strategic level, you move your armies around on a map of the country, much of which is blank and uncharted at the start of the game. For encounters the display switches to a tactical view displaying the various units of cavalry,

bowmen, and so on. This is no better or worse than most – by which I mean that it in no way simulates any kind of realistic medieval warfare. Units have morale, for instance, which is affected by the losses they take; but a unit isolated from other parts of your army does not seem to suffer any morale problems as a result. This means that you can cheerfully adopt the most ragtag of tactical approaches and still do fine.

Troops are accompanied by leaders who are equivalent to D&D style characters, getting comparable in power to massed army units when they reach high levels. Advancement in level (for both troops and leaders) comes from winning battles, and troops can also be trained when not doing anything else for a month. This is a good option for the winter, when inhospitable conditions can whittle away at armies on the march, but it can be expensive. The advantage of higher levels, as well as increased efficiency and hit points, is that troops become eligible for better equipment. Bowmen must start with crossbows or short bows, for example, but once they reach third level you can re-equip them with longbows.

In effect, bowmen are the key to winning battles. A couple of cavalry units can 'entrench' in front of them and will draw the

fire of the enemy for very few losses while your bowmen snipe whichever enemy troops are the most vulnerable or dangerous. This could have been avoided if the computer played the opponents more intelligently. Unfortunately, even on Expert level your opponents will be just as dumb – there'll just be more of them.

The graphics in the game are quite disappointing, especially considering the importance of these in fantasy gaming. CGA seems to be the prevalent mode, recognisable by familiar dirty orange colour. The text, too, is blotchy: where are the sleek graphics of **Red Lightning**, SSI?

Overall though, quite a good 'fun game' along the lines of campaign D&D. However, I would have preferred the designers to drop the tactical side altogether, or at least given the option to switch to instant battle resolution. Fighting a succession of poor opponents became repetitious, and it is almost impossible to lose a battle even if the odds are stacked against you. I won the final battle for the capital while tired and emotional – and while this might have made for an entertaining coronation ceremony, it hardly suggests that the game is much of a challenge.

Dave Morris

GOLD OF THE AMERICAS

DESIGNED BY

IAN TROUT AND STEPHEN HART

PUBLISHED BY

STRATEGIC STUDIES GROUP

PRICE £24.95

GAME PLAY: 8

GRAPHICS: 9

Available for the PC.

There used to be an SPI game called *Conquistador* which excellently depicted the European colonisation of the Americas, and for anyone prepared to wade through the book-keeping and plethora of tables it gave an interesting view of the period. *Gold of the Americas* deals with the same subject and not surprisingly has many similarities – except that, with the computer handling all the tables, it's a lot easier to play.

You begin as Spain, France, Portugal or England. The interesting thing is that you don't play the governments of these countries, but instead a cartel of financiers and merchant-adventurers. International diplomacy occurs independently of what you do and can be a real pain – like when you're set to give your rival a kicking and you then discover that his country has just allied with yours.

The map shows the whole of the New World and you can click on different territories for details of natives, gold and mineral resources, agriculture and climate. First, though, an explorer has to be sent into the territory. He needs to be backed up by an army or two to have a good chance of bringing out some loot – particularly if the territory is well populated with tough natives. Under historical settings this isn't too bad, since at least you know that places like Mexico and Peru will need a three-star explorer such as Cortez with good military escort. Random settings are an option for the steel-nerved.

Once a territory has been explored it can be colonised. Spain and Portugal have more explorers at the start and tend to get the richer pickings, while France and England content themselves with raiding those colonies (another use for explorers) and perhaps colonising second-rate places that the others have explored and found wanting.

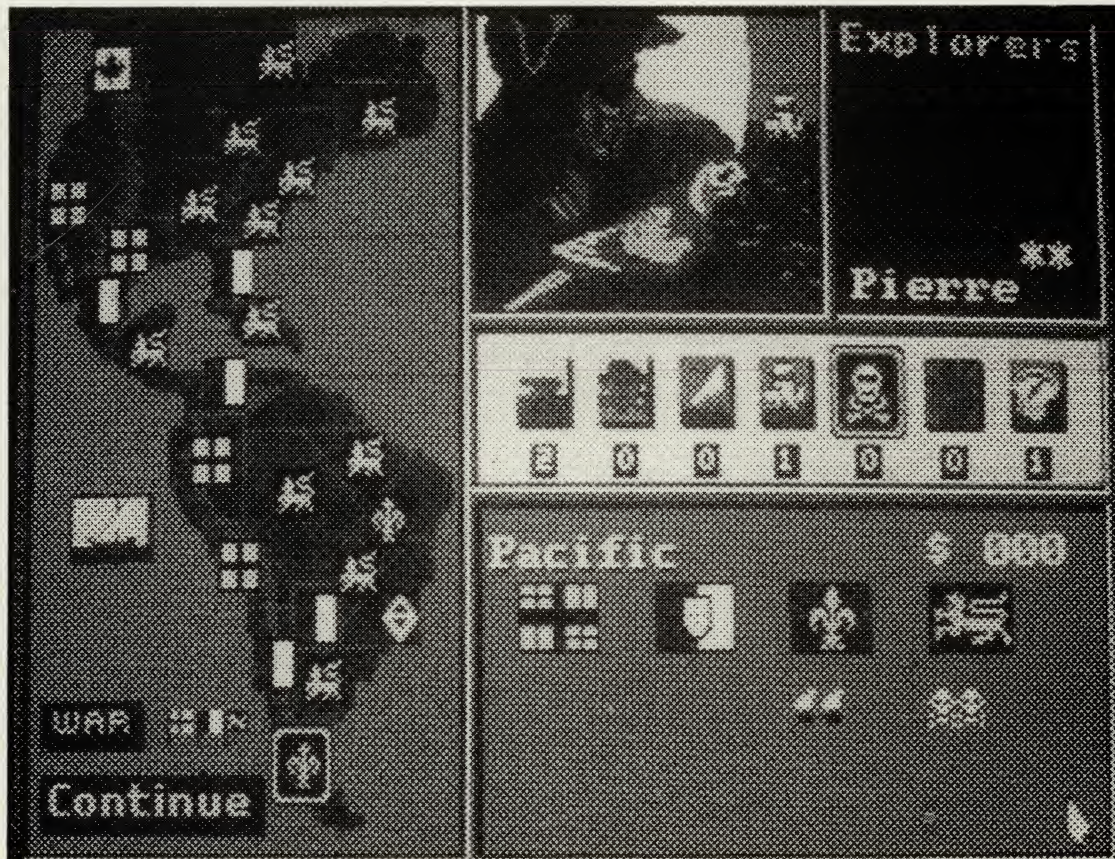
You soon get to realise that once you start investing in the New World you're on a financial rollercoaster that forces you to look for ever-greater profits. This is not a game for lily livered liberals. You have to be ready to ruthlessly exploit natives, slaves and even your own colonials; you will sometimes send armies into a territory with a policy of outright genocide; you'll be giving letters of marque to the most rapacious bloodsuckers to sail the

Seven Seas, and you may even have cause to rub your hands with glee when a touch of smallpox does the job of 16th Century germ warfare.

The graphics in EGA mode are quite splendid – bright colours which capture the flavour of the game, an excellent map, and nicely drawn figures which strike the right balance between jokey and cartoon-like.

The game is entertaining and gives some clue to why the European powers behaved as they did in the New World. But it has one flaw. Raids on other people's colonies are the best source of revenue, since they contribute to your invisible Secret Funds that the taxman doesn't know about. Since it wouldn't work out if everybody played that way (because there would be no colonies to raid) the system awards victory points for starting and developing colonies. This means that, rather as in the board game *Britannia*, there is a tendency to do things for the sake of victory points instead of for a real purpose. All the same, it's a good product – even though you may discover, as I did more than once, that final victory is much more likely to go to the (computer-run) breakaway Independent nations of the New World than to the colonial powers of the Old.

Dave Morris





Dazzling graphics including 256-color VGA/MCGA!

Supersonic arcade action from start to finish.

Save the mutant survivors of a nuclear holocaust!

BLOOD.

MINDSCAPE
For further information on Mindscape products and your local Dealer, contact:
Mindscape International Limited, PO Box 1019, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 4DW.
Tel. 0444 86 545/547.



Available in all major 16 bit formats.



GRIDIRON!

DESIGNED BY
ED FLETCHER

PUBLISHED BY
BETHESDA SOFTWORKS

PRICE £19.95

GAME PLAY: 8

GRAPHICS: 3

Available for the PC, ST and Amiga.

To the uninitiated, the game of (American) Football looks like a bunch of overgrown homicidal nursery school kids playing at being bumper cars. The student of the game, however, knows there is a large strategic element to it, perhaps more so than any other team sport. It's been called 'chess with human pieces' but with its stop-start action it is just as valid to compare it to poker, with each 'down' being like another round of betting, involving bluff and counter bluff, and an analysis of your opponent's previous tendencies. Of course, just like in poker, people who play it can get their legs broken . . .

Gridiron! with its mixture of strategy and arcade play, seeks to combine the two elements of brain and brawn. Despite misgivings about strategy games that require joystick waggling skills – or in this case, mouse waggling skills – I have to admit I was suitably impressed, particularly as this game took four years to cross the Atlantic and can therefore hardly be expected to be 'state of the art'.

The game is a two player game: you against a friend or the computer. If you play the computer you have four difficulty levels from which to choose. Increasing the difficulty level increases the speed and strength of the computer team's players, and – so the rules claim – also leads to more intelligent play calling by the computer. This may be so, but I cannot say I have noted any signs that the program logs the play calling pattern of the human player and selects its play accordingly. Most probably the program only takes into account the down, the yards needed, the score and the time left in the game when choosing its own plays.

The game is played on a real time basis according to the regular rules of pro football, which is to say that you will get delay of game penalties, punt, field goals, safeties, touchdowns, time outs, two minute warnings and six thousand beer commercials. The screen action is viewed

from overhead, with each football player being represented by a round blob. The graphics certainly aren't up to the standards of TV Sports Football but the format does give a good diagrammatic overview of what is happening in the game.

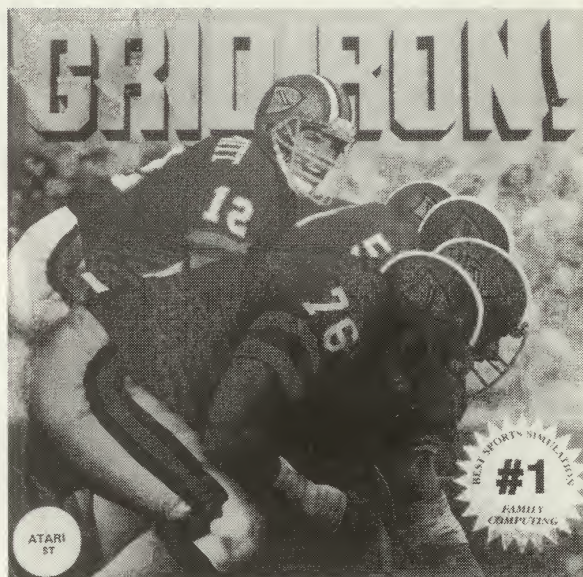
In **Gridiron!** you get to be the coach and call the plays, and you also get to control an 'active player' on each down, which is where the mouse waggling comes in. On offense (sic) you control the ball carrier, and on defense (sic) you control the player of your choice, determined by you before the snap of the ball. All players not controlled by you execute their programmed instructions, according to the play selected by you or the computer.

MATCH PREPARATION

There are two elements to the coaching side of the game: pre-game, and play calling. In the pre-game section you can draft your own team and devise your own plays using the John Madden chalkboard-style 'Play Creation Utility'. Any teams or plays you devise may be saved to disk for future use.

In designing your own team you are given a points allocation which you may spend on boosting your players' abilities. For the purposes of the game there is only one player per position, which means 23 positions in all (punter and place kicker are combined). The player in each position is rated in terms of speed and strength, and it costs more to increase the abilities of players in key positions such as quarterback or receiver. With a little imagination it should be possible to use the points allocation system to introduce trading between teams and handicapping allowances for inexperienced players should you wish to run a league.

Having drafted your team, you may consider that the standard plays in the Playbook do not make full use of your squad's abilities, in which case you will want to use the Play Creation Utility. The rules allow you to devise a new play (or modify an existing one) during the course of a match, but this will lead to a time consuming interruption to the match, and it is therefore better to have some special plays already available on disk. Devising the plays is a jolly affair, which entails selecting blocking assignments for your



linemen, devising passing routes for your receivers to run and detailing blocking or rushing duties for your running backs. Before you know it you are covering the screen with what looks like strands of spaghetti, devising the most elaborate trick plays. You are best advised to follow the KISS (keep it simple, stupid) principle, otherwise your players will end up crunching into each other like it was chunking out time in a Kilburn pub.

PLAYING A MATCH

In a match you have 20 defensive and 20 offensive plays from which to choose, plus any you have devised yourself. Each play is numbered and on each down you use the mouse to select the number of the play you want to execute, whether it be an inside run, long bomb, reverse, 61 pass defense, blitz, 7 man zone or whatever. Any time up to the snap of the ball you may 'call an audible' and change the play. If you are playing defense, when you hear the quarterback shouting out the count prior to the snap of the ball you should select the player on your team whom you want to control; you do this by moving the cursor over the round dot which represents him and clicking the mouse. Once the ball is snapped you may then use the mouse to move him all over the field, to make tackles or to cover receivers. It's worth varying the defensive player you choose to control as this gives you an insight into the roles and objectives of the players in different positions.

On offense, you always control the player with the ball. Initially this will be the quarterback. He will run to wherever you place the cursor, so if you are expecting a running play you should place him adjacent to the path of the running back (as indicated on the Playbook diagram). When the running back pulls alongside the quarterback you should quickly click

on the mouse to hand the ball to the running back. If this is successful (it takes practice) you now control the running back. While all of this has been going on your offensive line has been doing battle with the defensive line and all hell will be breaking loose. You generally have a split second in which to decide where to run. Hopefully your linemen will have created a gap through which your running back can run. In my experience, however, it is difficult establishing a productive running game. The game system seems to encourage a passing game.

If you elect to pass you will first want to drop your quarterback into the pocket or have him scramble away from the pass rush and then 'anchor' him in place by clicking the mouse button and keeping it pressed down. You then move the cursor into the running path of one of your eligible receivers and release the mouse button. The ball wings its way towards your man and if he catches it, you then get a chance to do some 'open field running', and gain a few more yards. Despite the crude graphics, the game system gives an excellent impression of how it must feel for a quarterback as you quickly scan the screen to see if any of your receivers are open, all the while keeping half an eye out to see whether a sack is imminent. Pretty soon you find yourself looking for your primary receiver, or failing that, your secondary receiver or, in emergencies, the running back who is waiting for the dump off and hey presto – all that meaningless garble spouted by the commentators on Channel 4's American Football programme starts to mean something.

As I said earlier, I was dubious about the decision to combine strategy and arcade action but in **Gridiron!** it works. There are enough strategic options to satisfy the armchair coach, although more detailed statistics and some personalisation of the 'round blob' football players would have been appreciated, while at the same time the arcade action succeeds in convincing you that the split second decisions made on the field are just as important as the elaborately planned judgements made on the sidelines. The game probably would not appeal to people who are not fans of the sport and might be a bit too frivolous for hard core statistical replay freaks, but for one off head to head confrontations this one ranks up there with **Accolade's Hardball!**

John Harrington

HEAD COACH

DESIGNED BY
C S ADAMS

PUBLISHED BY
CODA SOFTWARE

PRICE £24.95

GAME PLAY: 6

GRAPHICS: 5

Available for the ST.

This is a new version of a game that was doing the rounds a couple of years ago. It is a British game based on American Football and, as its name suggests, you take on the role of a head coach, deciding on the starting line-ups and the tactics of your team, guiding them through the season with a view to winning the Super Bowl.

The team you coach is called The Schoburg Franklins, a completely imaginary outfit consisting of completely imaginary players. The game postulates that the Franklins have replaced one of the established teams in the National Football League. You get to choose which team to

replace, which is a neat way of determining game difficulty, because the better the team you replace (for instance you substitute the Franklins for the Giants), the harder your playing schedule will be.

There are essentially two parts to the game. The first part consists of deciding who your best players are, and picking a team accordingly. The second part consists of playing a match, where you, as Head Coach, call in the plays from the sidelines.

TEAM MATTERS

The slim but adequate rule book gives biographical details of all the players on the Franklins' staff, hinting at their strengths and weaknesses. The program also allows you to access a welter of data on each player, such as his speed over the 40-yard dash, his weight, height and even the college he played for before turning professional. As the season progresses further information becomes available for analysis in the form of playing statistics. Thus you can compare the average yardage gained by your two starting running backs, or print off a list of the players who have made interceptions this season. This statistical data, together with the biographical data, plus player ratings



IBM, Amiga
C-64
Apple
ST

WAR GAMES, ADVENTURE GAMES
SIMULATORS & SPORTS

Strategic Plus Software
Dept GI
PO Box 8, Hampton, Middx TW12 3XA
Telephone 01-941 6163

**STRATEGIC
PLUS
SOFTWARE**

Send £2.50 for *extensive* catalogue.
Prop S Harper.

provided by your 'assistant coaches' (that is, the computer), help you to determine the best line-up for your team.

MATCH DAY

Once you have chosen your starting line-up you are ready to play a match. The program does not give you much information on the quality of your opponents. You can look at the league standings to see how good they might be, plus you are provided with ratings (ranging from poor to excellent) for the opponent's defense and offense, but you might just as well go by your knowledge of the team's reputation in the real world, except that this might lull you into thinking that your opponents will play in a similar style to their counterparts. Unfortunately the program does not seem sophisticated enough to do this. In the main, the program seems to favour a balanced effort of about 50% passes and 50% runs – even if it is playing as the Indianapolis Colts – and a high risk defense, involving five, six or seven players at the line of scrimmage and precious few linebackers.

As head coach you have a standard playbook from which to choose your plays. On offense this consists of the old stand-bys such as dive, slant, draw, sweep, reverse, pitch and bootleg for the running game and a variety of short, medium and long passes for the passing game. The success of each play seems more dependent on the defensive formation opposing

it than the quality of players involved, but I could be wrong. There is one play which seems to yield an average gain of about 5 yards over the course of a match, which is handy but which undermines the game once you have discovered what it is. I learned about it from Mike Siggins, so if you want to be a massively successful head coach, drop Mike a tenner care of GI and he will let you into the secret.

Defense is even more simplistic, and involves nothing more than choosing a formation from the 20 or so provided. The formations range from 3-1-7 (the 'prevent' defense for very long yardage situations), to the standard 3-4-4 (good for pass coverage and wide running plays), to the gambling 6-1-4 (blitz!) to the short yardage 8-1-2. Playing defense is a bit bland and ambiguous. *You* might be choosing a 5-3-3 formation to get a pass rush going to the quarterback, but how do you know that the computer does not assume that you have a five man front line in order to stuff a running play?

GOOD POINTS, BAD POINTS

Were it a game by itself, the match day program would be a real duffer. Although it features fumbles, interceptions and the thirty second clock, it does not have time outs, two minute drills or a proper game clock (you can never tell whether you have got time for one or two more plays at the end of each half). Its saving grace is the end-quarter statistics, which enable

you to revise your game plan as the game progresses. Even so, there are far better match simulations on the market.

Within the context of the 'campaign' game, however, the match day program is passable. The management side of the game also lacks a few features such as trading of players and the ability to add new plays to the playbook, but when compared to the sort of drivel we have to put up with in soccer management games, Coda Software's effort is a real winner. The limited resources available to a company such as Coda mean this is not a very ambitious game, so you do not get much in the way of snazzy graphics. In some ways, however, this works in the game's favour, as the programmer's party pieces do not get in the way of the game play. And praise be, all player input is performed through the keyboard and not by a million and one clicks on the mouse; this ranks as a giant leap forward in game design, achieved by a discreet step backwards in game technology. It is gratifying to see a small British software company come up with a reasonable sport simulation, and although the game will probably pall after a few seasons it should maintain its appeal long enough to get gridiron junkies through the baseball season.

John Harrington

This game is available by Mail Order direct from Coda Software, ☎ 01-789 9551.

PRO FOOTBALL SIMULATOR

DESIGNED BY
JOHN SAXON

PUBLISHED BY
MICROSEARCH

PRICE £39.95

GAME PLAY: 9

GRAPHICS: 6

Available for the Amiga.

Pro Football is not for the faint hearted. The 90 pages of instructions are clear and well organised but intimidating in their attention to detail. This is not an arcade conversion which relies on spurious joystick skill for success. It is a professional football simulation requiring cunning and commitment. A considerable amount of effort needs to be expended to explore its potential.

Virtually anything attempted in the professional game can be ordered in **Pro Football**. This includes: fake punts and field goals, fair catches, throwing out of bounds, calling audibles on the line of scrimmage, sending a man in motion, and running reverses. On both offense and defense it is possible to make very detailed calls, specifying assignments for individual players. Guards can pull, defensive backs can provide double coverage, and receivers can run any conceivable pass route. Add to this the variable weather conditions and playing surfaces available.

Each team has a roster of 45 players, each of whom has an overall rank and 11 separate abilities. These abilities uniquely determine a player's skill in all situations, though usually only five are important for each position. For example, a quarterback requires running speed, running strength, passing strength, passing accuracy, and a tendency to scramble while passing.

The 15 teams included with the game are not from the NFL. They have such names

as the Tigers, Sharks, Rebels and Buffaloes. There is also a template team to help create new teams as you see fit. There is even the opportunity to trade players through the League Office. The editor makes it simple to alter player characteristics.

On screen players are represented by their numbers within a small box. The colour of a team's numbers and the boxes representing their uniforms can be changed easily enough. It may seem a rather basic system, but it works well. I prefer this system to that used in other games as players can be followed as they try to get open for a pass without the coach becoming confused. As play gets under way you can hear the quarterback's snap count, and then the crunching tackles.

The beginner playbook provides 18 offensive and 9 defensive plays. As a rule it is best to direct only the offense until you become familiar with **Pro Football**. The offense is relatively easy to follow, whereas the wrong defensive call can be disastrous. At any time the computer may

be instructed to take control of either defense or offense, or both.

On offense you have the option to run, pass, or use a play action call. At the edge of the field you will always be able to see how many yards are needed for a first down, and which down your team is currently on. Punting on first down should be avoided, as should running on fourth and long from your own five yard line. Field goals and punts can be ordered when appropriate to do so, with the opportunity to fake them and run instead.

As **Pro Football** will undoubtedly appeal to gamers with a good knowledge of American Football the beginner playbook will soon be passed over in favour of the standard playbook. It contains 61 running plays, 50 passing plays, and two plays to control the clock. On defense it is possible to use 104, including blitzes, rushing, double coverage, zone and goal line. Included in the offensive plays are the trusty quarterback sneak and two passes by the halfback.

If the standard playbook is still found to be limiting it is possible to design additional plays. There is no limit to the variation, on offense and defense. I found that I needed some shorter pass routes to improve the quarterback's completion rate. With up to five receivers available on some plays you must attempt to achieve a goal, rather than assign random patterns for the receivers to run. The intention must be to have at least one receiver open when the quarterback releases the ball. At any time during the game you may concentrate on certain receivers and make any substitutions necessary for putting pressure on the defense. The defense can use a 34 or 43 formation, with any number of variations in terms of blocking assignments, zones, and man to man coverage.

The bad things which happen in pro football also happen in **Pro Football**. Apart from incomplete passes this includes: fumbles, interceptions, blocked punts, safeties, missed field goals and extra point attempts. Indeed, an offensive drive may falter when a penalty is called for such things as unsportsmanlike conduct, facemasking, tripping or encroachment. In the event of a penalty being called the opposition may accept or decline, depending on the situation. It is also possible for players to become injured, and therefore they might be unavailable for a future game. For example, a 920-play injury equates to perhaps seven games. If the injured player is a key performer it could be bad for his team.

In addition to a playbook, every team uses a gameplan. This determines how often a listed play is used in a certain situation, such as fourth and short. For each situation the team can use up to 15 offensive or defensive plays, with an appropriate weighting assigned to each one. It will become necessary to make changes as experience is gained. I reduced the likelihood of blitzes on defense and added further plays to counter middle and deep passes. On offense I cut down the number of halfback passes and deep passes, replacing them by short passes. A considerable amount of fine tuning is needed to create the right balance between passing and running. With a studied gameplan you can allow the computer to run your team while you watch the plays develop.

Pro Football includes versions for 1 Meg and 512K, providing for future memory upgrades. The 1 Meg version, as you would expect, is more user friendly. It uses the mouse for order selection, instead of the keyboard. Apart from this there is little difference between the two versions. The playbook can even be altered to give popular plays shorter names, including single figure numbers.

Pro Football is most challenging when your opponent is human. While the computer is certainly no pushover it adds to the enjoyment if your adversary is both deadly and unpredictable. The game can be played with an unseen opponent by modem, and by using a null modem cable. I believe a modem game, even with someone using an Amiga in another room, could be a stimulating experience. The main requirement is finding a keen player with a similar skill level. Even an experienced player can benefit from computer-recommended plays at any time during a game.

Finally, I need to stress that **Pro Football** will only yield realistic results if gameplans are realistic. Scores of 66-52 are possible unless the defensive playbook is adjusted. My only criticism is the amount of work necessary to get a set of realistic game statistics, but that may be due to laziness on my part, or because most computer games encourage us to be lazy. I thoroughly recommend **Pro Football** to anyone keen on playing an accurate football simulation. If you know little about American Football when you buy this game, you'll know plenty within a few weeks.

George G Campbell

Available on import from Strategic Plus Software.

SUPERBOWL REPLAY

Probably no game attracts sporting statisticians like American Football, and nowhere is this reflected more than in the plethora of stats based games on the subject. But just how accurate are these? And are computers better equipped than their boardgame cousins to come up with winning predictions? To find out, we decided to hold our own SuperBowl to see which of four games game closest to reflecting the score of the recent final between the San Francisco 49ers and the Denver Broncos. The result of this match, which nothing on earth could have predicted, was a 55-10 victory for the Broncos.

Computer Quarterback

(SSI game played on Atari 800XL)

49ers 24 Broncos 7

Pro Football

(Microsearch game played on Amiga)

49ers 30 Broncos 24

Paydirt

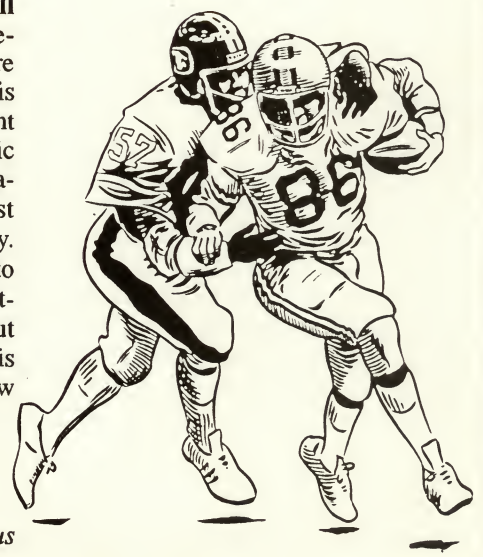
(Avalon Hill game)

49ers 10 Broncos 20

Stats Pro Football

(Avalon Hill game)

49ers 31 Broncos 10



Activision

Heading your way in March is **Warhead**, a *unique* 'and original space simulator combining both strategy and arcade action'. Wow! The scenario is set in the 21st century and Earth has been 'violently attacked by an insect-like alien nation'. Whatever will they think of next? To combat this threat to humanity, the people of Earth turn to each other for combined strength and support, forming its only defence – the rather unfortunately named 'Fist of Earth World Government'. Will they make a fist of things? Find out if you have an ST or Amiga.

Ninja Spirit is a spirited arcade conversion in which you can grapple with nasty ninjas, trundle over marshland, and so on, and so on. If, however, you destroy the Last Warlock, you can go on to 'play with the wolves'. Here, doggy doggy. (AM, ST)

Electronic Arts

A life on the ocean depths. That's what you're likely to get in **688 Attack Sub**, a simulation that puts you in control of the sort of craft you couldn't buy on your credit card. Hunt and evade enemies, use the most advanced sub technology, fire Harpoon missiles, blow up the world in glorious colour. (March, AM).

In **Powerdrome**, players compete for the Cybernefe trophy – the futuristic equivalent of the Zenith Data Systems Cup. In this game of jet racing, there are seven different circuits on five different planets – these really are away games. A strategic element is introduced by having to fine tune your craft for the different atmospheric conditions. **Powerdrome** has a two player option if you care to link upto2 PCs via a dual datalink. Known as the Ayrton Senna variant, this enables you to force your opponent off the track.

Just when you thought it was safe to go hang gliding again someone pulls out their chopper. And this time it's an attack chopper! To be precise it's the **LHX Attack Chopper**. The LHX is said to be the most 'flexible and deadly' chopper ever designed. **LHX Attack Chopper** includes 20 different viewing positions, including the chance to stay with the chopper right until it makes contact. Fast combat and a smooth ride make this chopper ideal for the 'simulation expert'(!). (PC)

From Interplay, who produced the Bard's Tale series (A Midsummer Night's Scream?), comes **Dragon Wars** – A

BITS

Role-playing Adventure (what isn't these days?). This tale is set in the humid world of Oceana, but not in 1984, where 'the streets are paved with gold and no one wants for anything'. Unfortunately you can't just hop on a 49 bus to get there (for one thing there would be no game). Inevitably, 'chaos reigns supreme', magic and roll-ups are illegal, and the food's a bit iffy. Your job is to find out why. Players can use characters created in the aforementioned Bard's Tales. But not Macbeth. (PC).

Mindscape/Origins

Ultima V – Warriors of Destiny, you'll be amazed to hear, is the follow up to **Ultima IV**. Comes with a hankie, a Book of Lore, and the diary of Lord British. Why, there's even a game! And very good it looks too. Full review next issue.

Infogramme

Bonjour. This French company has the gall (geddit?) to make a game about rock'n'roll! Take off your earplugs though, for **Jumping Jack** will mercifully feature NO FRENCH MUSIC WHATSOEVER (*merci dieu*). The object in this arcade game is to save the gentlefolk of rock from the drug fiends of classical music. (AM)

Eagle Rider on the other hand has nothing to do with drugs, music, or indeed anything on earth. This is set on the planet DHSS where humans fight cyborgs in an effort to get their weekly giros. (AM)

Accolade

Gunboat is the first 'river combat' simulation since Oxford beat Cambridge in the boat race. Owners will experience 'first hand the drama of tight quarters river combat'. Blimey! Make sure you put your cozzie on. As the very wet commander of Patrol Boat Riverine, your missions will include busting cocaine runners and the contras in South America, and apprehending law breaking American insurgents in the Panama Canal zone. (PC)

If you're more of a poseur than a para, then howsabout **Powerboat USA**? Ex-

perience the thrill of travelling at speeds of more than 200mph, and drowning in an authentic 600HP Superboat. A special external helicopter-mount camera gives players an overhead view of the race as they rip through the crashing waves onto the rocks. (PC, AM, ST)

Virgin

Get out the lager, put on your Union Jack shorts, it's **World Cup Soccer '90**, brought to you by the world famous balloonist and litter expert, Richard Branson. Or more accurately (*who cares about accuracy?* – Ed) his company Virgin on the Mastertronic. The games will feature teams, and half time highlights, from the qualifying rounds of the world cup. (All 8 bit and 16 bit computers).

The converted

688 Attack Sub (Electronic Arts) – Amiga. **TV Sports Football** (Mirrorsoft) – PC. **Jack Nicklaus Golf** (Accolade) – ST. **Fire Brigade** (Mindscape) – ST. **Risk** (Leisure Genius) – ST, AM, PC.

CHARTS

Computer Games

- 1 Harpoon (Mirrorsoft) PC.
- 2 Action Stations (Conflict Analysis) PC.
- 3 Knights of Legend (Mindscape) PC, C64.
- 4 Romance of the Three Kingdoms (Koel) PC, AM.
- 5 Drakkhen (Infogrammes) AM, ST.
- 6 Pro Football (Microsearch) AM.
- 7 Battles of Napoleon (SSI) PC, C64.
- 8 Ultima V (Mindscape/Origins) PC, ST, C64.
- 9 Waterloo (PSS/Mirrorsoft) PC, ST, AM.
- 10 Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilms) PC.

Chart supplied by Strategic Plus Software, PO Box 8, Hampton, Middx TW12 3XA.

LETTERS

REBOUND

Pole position

As further evidence that *Games International* is truly international and more than a (leading) UK authority, I thought you'd be interested in a couple of Polish children's games we own.

Lesne Przygody (or 'Adventure in the Forest') is a Ludo variant with the added tactical consideration of 'safe' squares. The board features a pop up 3D 'Home' area in the centre. In **Grzybobranie** ('Mushroom-picking' to you) players also take a walk in the forest, this time collecting wooden pegs, or mushrooms, they find on the way round. The player who collects the most, while avoiding dropping them in the river, wins the game.

Both games are simply presented but delightful and we had the pleasure of playing them with my cousin on her visit from Poland last year.

Rule queries are, however, difficult to resolve without assistance. For example, from the rule book: 'Nastepnie rzucamy kolejno kostki.' Try that in a Reality Check.

Marcus Zientek
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.

Wild about Oscar

May I first say thank you for your magazine. Over the years I've subscribed to the late, great *Gamer* magazine (which folded soon after I took out the annual subscription). Then came the short-lived *Games Gazette*, which was an interesting magazine especially for collectors like myself. That also folded soon after I took out the annual subscription. This was back in 1983 (Christmas). Since then nothing to interest boardgamers until you came along (with *Games Monthly* for a short time). I must admit you had me worried in August when the issue was late (I'd just taken out my subscription). But you've already outlasted the others mentioned, long may you continue.

Perhaps I could make a couple of suggestions. How about a Collector's Corner regular feature, looking at games pre-1960 (something which *Games Gazette* did very successfully). Also as well as game reviews perhaps could we have some 'Books about games' reviews, and finally (I know I can't count) could we have a small section for requests for rules of games. I say this last one because, as a

collector of games I spend many weekends searching car boot sales, flea markets etc for games of interest, and often find interesting looking games with no rules. Can I start the ball rolling? Does anyone know anything about the game **Oscar**, dated 1940/50. It has 'stars' like Glenn Ford, Rita Hayworth and Terry Moore (who?) as playing pieces. There is no manufacturers name. I think also there should be a board with the game, which I don't have.

The second game is what looks like a TV copy of the **Cluedo** idea. It's called **Who?** – **Philip Marlowe Mystery game** (taken from the exciting TV series!). It's Peter Pan registered, and is dated 1960. It's a how, why and who game. What I want to know is, how?

That's it, I've taken up too much of your space. Keep up the good work. Oh! before I forget can I say a belated thank you to a gentleman from Southampton (I hope he's still gaming) who sent me the rules to **Car-Soc** (now there's an interesting game to develop).

Philip Wakefield
Castle Donington, Derby DE7 2NS

Terry Moore was a Hollywood starlet who, like Esther Williams, was better known for her swimsuits than for any acting ability. We trust this answers your query.

Save the underground

If Jack Jaffé is the UK's leading authority on board games how come his own game is about the worst laid out game of all time? The board could be described as a map of the New York subway overlaid by a map of the Paris Metro, by the Oslo TBahn, the Berlin S-Bahn, by the London Underground and then madly coloured by an infant with a stack of Day-glo wax crayons! Fine game it may be, but I daren't go near the board under fluorescent lighting in case I suffer an epileptic fit! (The last time I had one was, funnily enough, the time I subscribed to GI!)

Malcolm Smith
N-2010 Strømmen, Norway

Disgusted of Roma

I was *horrified* to read in issue 11, in Dave Morris's review of **Shogun** that 'a good adventure should be capable of being

played from start to finish using a little common sense and forethought, not in continuous saves and replays.' That is entirely wrong: adventures are *not* role-game scenarios: they are puzzles, and learning from death/failure/partial success is necessary and useful. A good adventure is like those produced by Topologika (Jonathan Partington, Pete Killworth etc), for example **Acheton**, **Avon** and **Murdac**.

Obviously, an adventure cannot be reviewed from a cursory wander – if the reviewer does not complete a good deal of the game, or at least see a 'spoon-fed' solution, s/he is in no position to really know what is going on.

A J F Atkinson
Roma, Italia

Up front

After reading your magazine, issue #11, two points spring to mind:

i) It's a great magazine which offers intelligent and fair appraisals of the games featured.

ii) But one negative point, albeit a small one, was a section of the Upfront column. I am referring to the remarks made about the Elvira interview in *GM*. The statement made shows the contributor's ignorance about the content of the article, rather than substantiating his claim of it being sexist. I agree with the criticisms made about the sexist problem in the gaming world, but I consider *GI* to be above making cheap jibes directed at other magazines: leave that to the trash.

Otherwise keep up the good work.

David A Daniel
Crewe, Cheshire CW2 7PJ

We would have thought a picture showing a woman bound to a tree was self-evidently sexist, irrespective of the content of the accompanying article. **GI**

Write to: *Games International*,
Lamerton House, 23a High
Street, Ealing, London W5 5DF

Or Fax: 01-579 6485

Free classifieds

GI classified ads are free to private individuals, £1/word to commercial organisations.

DESPERATELY SEEKING *Tales of the Arabian Nights* (West End boardgame). Will pay any reasonable price for complete game, condition not important. Jan Perfect, Box Hill School, Mickleham, Surrey RH5 6EA. ☎ 0372 379392.

UNUSED BOARD GAMES for sale: *Cry Havoc* (Standard Games) £6, *Superpower* (Games Workshop) £8, *Arnhem Bridge, 8th Army, Victory at Waterloo* (Attackx) £5 each. Buyer to collect or pay postage. ☎ 01-337 0608 after 7pm.

FOR SALE: the Brian Walker 40 yr old Hippy game, as listed in the GI Index. Excellent condition, the game that is, not the hippy. Mike Siggins, ☎ 01-505 5001 evenings.

SPIELBOX

Bi-monthly German language games review magazine. Send DM 54,- (plus DM 9,80 if you want it sent air mail) for a one year - six issue-subscription to: Huss-Verlag GmbH, Joseph-Dollinger-Bogen 5, Postfach 46 04 80, D-8000 München 46, West Germany.

UNUSED ROLEGAME: *Busldo* boxed set £7.50. Buyer to collect or pay postage. ☎ 01-337 0608 after 7pm.

WANTED: *Energle Poker, Apocalypse, Trade and Homas Tour.* CASH PAID. Also games for sale, send SAE for list. I would also be interested to hear from anyone interested in games in the Anglesey or N Wales area. Mervyn, ☎ 0407 720895.

PERCHANCE Northern Ireland's gaming fanzine will be launched at Maysfield Leisure Centre on the 18th February at the Dungeon Convention. Articles on any gaming subject will be considered for submission. Contact Jim Johnston at 44 Hillcrest Drive, Newtownabbey BT36 6EQ. ☎ (0232) 853730 (after six).

ROLE-PLAYING playtesters required (NOT *D&D/Warhammer*) aged 18+, with imagination. Acton area, evenings/weekends. Graham, ☎ 993 0107.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Job lot, £15: basic rules set 1; modules B4 The Lost City, N1 Against The Cult of the Reptile God, S2 White Plume Mountain, I2 Tomb of the Lizard King; The Rogues Gallery; Dungeons and Geomorphs set 2; Monster & Treasure Assortment set 3. Buyer to collect or pay postage. ☎ 01-337 0608 after 7pm.

WANTED: *Cosmic Encounter* Expansion sets 4 and 8. Tom, ☎ 0895 74000 xtn 2285 business hours.

SECONDHAND GAMES! Bought, sold or part exchanged. Send SAE for list of over 100 games to: Jim Crawford, 11 Canon Court, Nevendon, Basildon, Essex. ☎ 0268 534002.

WANTED: *Orion* (Parker Bros, 1977). Old puzzles: Think-a-dot, Twiddle, Anchor stone puzzles, Instant Insanity/Tantaliser puzzles, puzzle boxes, Wit's End, Meba, Game Jugo, etc. Non-standard Rubik Cubes. Books on puzzles and mathematical recreations, etc. David Singmaster, 87 Rodenhurst Road, London SW4 8AF. ☎ 01-674 3674.

WANTED: *Warlord/Apocalypse.* ☎ 01-304 6146.

GAMES REPS

Wanted for all areas. Send cv to: Michael Callaghan, Chart Hobby Ltd, Chart House, Station Road, East Preston, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN16 3AG.

ODDMENTS: Brand new Ian Livingstone *Casket of Souls* £1.50, 2nd and 3rd Citadel Compendium (the pair) £2, Citadel Journals Autumn 85 and Spring 87 (the pair) £2, Judges Guild *Fantastic Wilderlands* Be-

yonde No 67 £2.50. Buyer to collect or pay postage. ☎ 01-337 0608 after 7pm.

ECW WARGAME: The King's War covering the ECW 1642-46. 44 page A4 rules booklet. 18" x 23.5" map, 7 scenarios and 9 counter sheets (you cut and paste). Already sold in excess of 700 copies. £6 post free UK (£7 surface mail) from Charles Vasey, 75 Richmond Park Road, East Sheen, London SW14 8JY.

3 NEW BOARD GAMES

Launch Oct 1990. Small investment required in return for a piece of the action.

For further details contact Tony or David at Martone, Excell Print, St Michael's Works, Aldham Rd, Hadleigh, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 6BJ, ☎ 823262.

USUTHUI The Battle of Rorkes's Drift. £8.95 plus £1.05 P&P, from Valhalla Games, 19 Luke Road, Droylsden, Manchester M35 4FE.

COMPUTER GAMES WANTED

Microprose's *Command Decision* series (*Crusade in Europe, Conflict in Vietnam and Decision in the Desert*) for the IBM PC. Contact *Games International*, Lamerton House, 23a High St, Ealing, London W5 5DF.

VERY EARLY MONOPOLY set for sale (cardboard, not metal playing pieces) in near mint condition. Unfortunately no board - components were packaged separately. Offers? Also *Escape From Colditz*, Parker (£8); *Railroader*, Waddingtons 1963 (£15); *Poleconomy* (New Zealand edition), World Games (£10); *Go* (oriental game), Ariel (£5); *Aviation*, ?, complete but no rules (£5). Prices exclude P&P. Paul Jeffries, 46 Towncourt Lane, Petts Wood, Kent BR5 1EH. ☎ 0689 34454.

REDUCED PRICES

Due to transit damage we have a number of games in wounded boxes, the games themselves are complete. These are available post-paid at Retail Price less 25%. Avalon Hill, Victory, FASA and Columbia titles only. For details, ☎ 0903 773170.

HELPI Just acquired old game (Spears, perhaps) *Amoeba* via car boot sale but with no rule book. Can anyone tell me anything about this game an/or send me a copy of the rules? Malcolm Smith, Statsråd Ihlensvei 66B, N-2010 Strømmen, Norway.

WANTED DESPERATELY: *Mediterranean* (Parker Brothers); *Blackfeet, Project KGB* (Waddingtons); *Election, Stockbroker* (Intellect); *Boxcars* (Erickson); *Saga* (Erikson); *Collect* (Stanley Gibbons); *Contraband* (Pepys); *Space 1999, Juggernaut* (Omnia); *Battle of Britain, L'Attaque, Tri-tactics* (Gibsons); *Battle for Britain, Reach the Summit* (Berwick); *O.R.B.I.T. (Lazy Days), Wild Life* (Spears); issues of *Games & Puzzles*. Will buy or trade. Alan R Moon, 15 Burnside St, Lancaster NH 03584. ☎ (603) 788 3818.

BOARD GAMES players wanted in Bridgnorth area. Will play anything. Games club has recently been formed, new members required for expansion. Contact Mark Kennett, 3 Wardle Close, Bridgnorth, Shropshire. ☎ 0746 761454.

JUDGES GUILD. The lot £12.50: *City-State of the Invincible Overlord, Wilderlands of High Fantasy, Fantastic Wilderlands Beyonds*. Buyer to collect or pay postage. ☎ 01-337 0608 after 7pm.

NOT JUST RAILWAY RIVALS!

Peninsular War, Pirate Island and Slick! will soon be joined by *Bus Boss, Winchester and Send!* in the Rostherne Range; and, of course, even more new RR maps. At all the best specialist games shops, or direct by post: latest details free and post free. Rostherne Games, 102 Prlory Rd, Milford Haven SA73 2ED. New number: ☎ 0646 692752.

CONVENTION DIARY

UK

SENTINEL 90. April 8, 1990 at the King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent from 10am to 6pm. Wargames and rolegames, trade stalls, participation games and competitions, bring and buy. Organised by the Stoke Wargames Group. Contact P Neale, 6 Emery Avenue, Newcastle, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST5 2JF.

BAYCON. April 13-15, 1990 at a hotel in the Exeter area. Residential boardgame convention in pleasant surroundings. Victor Ludorum tournament (sponsored by GI) and Britannia tournament. For more details contact Bob Mulholland, 16 Codrington St, Newtown, Exeter EX1 2BU.

CAMPAIGN 90. May 12 and 13, 1990 at Woughton Campus, Milton Keynes. **Warhammer, Warhammer 40K and Blood Bowl** championships. Contact M A Kay, 117 St Johns Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK3 5DZ.

BEER & PRETZELS Board Games Weekend, May 19 and 20, at the Heritage Brewery Museum, Anglesey Road, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. All kind of games, in an establishment with beer brewed on the premises. £4 for two days or £2.50 per day. B&B can be arranged if booked in advance. Contact Spirit Games, 98 Station St, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs. ☎ 0283 511293 or 0283 34801 (evenings).

MANORCON 90. July 20-23, 1990 at High Hall, Birmingham University. Boardgame convention featuring the National Team Diplomacy Championship and other tournaments. Convention fee £5 or £2 per day. Accommodation available. Contact Richard Walkerdine, 13 Offley Road, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2AZ.

CONJUNCTION. July 27-29, 1990 at New Hall College, Cambridge. Relaxed rolegame convention organised like an SF con rather than a selling exercise. £12 attending, B&B £21.50, £5 supporting. Contact Conjunction, c/o 25 Wycliffe Road, Cambridge CB1 3JD.

DRAKCON 90. August 18-19 at the College Dining Room, Northern College of Education, Hilton Drive, Aberdeen, on Saturday 18th from 9am to 11.30pm and on Sunday from 9am to 8.30pm. Games (mainly rolegames) convention which raises money for famine relief. £5 admission (£3.50 under 16s) for both days (£1 reduction for bookings before July 9). £3 for one day (£2 for under 16s). B&B accommodation is available at £10/night. Contact Sandy Douglas, 13 Springbank Terrace, Aberdeen AB1 2LS.

ARENA 90. August 25 1990 at the Addison Centre, Addison Park, Kempston, Beds. Wargames and role-playing convention organised by the Bedford Gladiators in association with the Kempston Fun Day and Kempston Lions and Bedfordshire County Council. Wargames, trade stands, role-playing, boardgames, bring and buy and painting competitions. Admission £2, under 14 £1. For further detail, contact Dave Wilkin, ☎ 0234 857394 or Ian Fellows, ☎ 0234 261254.

MANORCON PBM September 7-9, 1990 at High Hall, Birmingham University. Boardgames, PBM, computer & role-playing games, competitions, football tournaments and bar. For details write to Peter Calcraft, 13 Royal Mews, Princes St, Dorchester, Dorset ST1 1RL.

MINDGAMES 90 November 10 and 11, 1990 at the Novotel in Hammersmith. An international showcase for all types of gaming. Contact Simon Tittley/Bridget Seddon, Waltham Business Services, 105a Queen Street, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 1LR. ☎ 0628 770676.

EUROPE

SPIEL 90 October 25-28, 1990 at the Gruehelle, Essen. The biggest, the best, still at the same venue. Stay tuned for more details as they come in.

SPIELEFEST 90 November 23-25, Messepalast, Vienna, Austria. Austria's biggest games convention with more than 20 000 visitors.

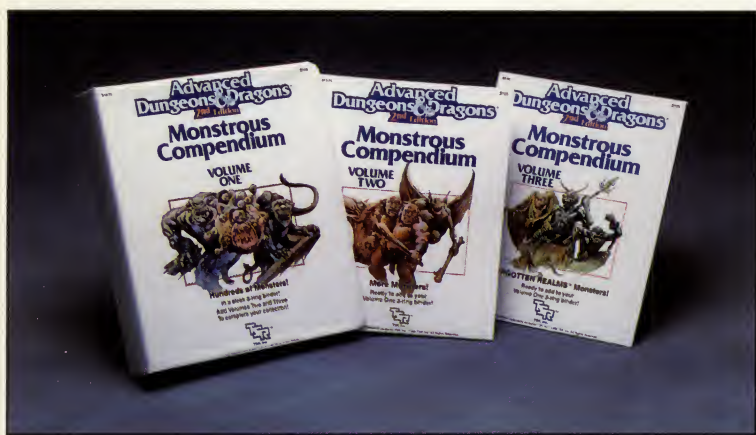
GREAT HEROES DEMAND GREAT OPPONENTS



What's a fantasy role-playing game without monsters? At the heart of any good AD&D® adventure, you'll find great monsters—dragons, trolls, giants, killer fungi, skeletal warriors, and who knows what else!

Now, in response to the suggestions of thousands of game players, TSR is releasing the AD&D 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendiums*. Volume One of this revised creature collection includes new and improved rules, expanded descriptions, illustrations, and statistical data needed for 144 pages worth of fantastic monsters—all in an easier-to-read format.

Presented in a colorful, sturdy vinyl binder (5-hole, D-ring format) *Monstrous Compendium*, Volume One lets you index your monsters in any order that suits your playing needs.



Volume One
Available Now!

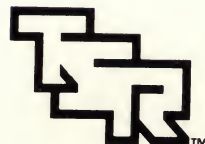
Volume Two
Available Now!

Volume Three
Available Now!

Volume Two is the perfect complement to *Monstrous Compendium* Volume One. Volume Two has 144 perforated, five-hole punched pages, including eight full-color panels that can be added to the *Monstrous Compendium* binder.

The focus of the third *Monstrous Compendium* is on monsters found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy campaign setting. All 64 pages are perforated and five-hole punched so they will fit in the *Monstrous Compendium* binder.

TSR's new *Monstrous Compendiums* are available at your local toy, book or hobby store. Pick up your copy today!



Ultima VI

The False Prophet



MINDSCAPE

For further information on Mindscape products and your local Dealer, contact:
Mindscape International Limited, PO Box 1019, Lewes, East Sussex BN8 4DW.
Tel. 0444 86 545/547.



In a cataclysm of sound and light, a bolt of searing blue fire strikes the earth!



Celebrating the 10 Year Anniversary of ULTIMA!

The first Ultima developed on and for IBM Tandy compatible computers!

Watch for the deluxe, limited-edition of Ultima VI.

Available in all major 16 bit formats.

ORIGIN
We create worlds.

1989 Origin Systems, Inc.

